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John M Stahl

GROWING WITH THE WEST

The Story of a Busy, Quiet Life

BY

JOHN M. STAHL

Former Editor of the *Illinois Farmer and Farmers' Call*
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of Midland Authors

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GROWING WITH THE WEST

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GROWING WITH THE WEST

GROWING WITH THE WEST

The Story of a Busy, Quiet Life

CHAPTER I

THE LIFE OF THE BOY

THE LOG CABIN

IT WAS a little, low log cabin, of one room and a lean-to, so poor and mean that it lacked a loft. The crude, warped door was in the south side. Opposite it was a window of twelve panes. There was another window in the east end, but it was hidden by a part of the high head-piece of the bed and the mirror on the bureau. The fireplace was in the west end of the room. Its back and sides were black with smoke and soot, but the flat, irregular stones that made the hearth were kept white. The floor was of split puncheon. The splinters had been cut off with an ax. As the edges of the puncheon had not been trimmed straight, there were wide cracks between them, freely admitting the cold or damp air; and other lurking and undesirable visitors, with four nimble feet or two active wings. Because of that the floor was nearly always covered with a "boughten" carpet; there being much straw between it and the puncheon. At times the carpet was removed. Perhaps The Boy's earliest recollection is of getting his foot between two puncheons and beneath them. He drew his leg along the crack until it was so narrow he could not get his foot above the puncheons, pull and twist as he might. It now hurt very much, and he was dreadfully alarmed, and cried and cried. After a while his mother, who was working in the garden, and who was quite deaf, came and released him. And then for days he lay much of the time on the floor or the bed, for he could not put any weight on that foot; it hurt very much if he hopped around on the other; and it hurt so much when he lay still that it was hard for him to sleep. But there was some compensation: he was allowed to lie on the trundle-bed in the daytime. The trundle-bed was almost as long and broad as the big bed, but it was low; and it had rollers on its feet, so that it could be put under the big bed in the daytime and be brought out at the side of the big bed at night. The children slept in the trundle-bed. He was the youngest.

The roof of the cabin was of clapboards. The hot sun of summer had warped them and the rain and snow came into the cabin. But there was only one thing in it that rain or snow might damage: the "bureau." The human beings in the cabin were rain-proof and snow-proof. Perhaps the bureau was not. It had been made by The Boy's father, in 1850, when he married and set up housekeeping. He was a maker of furniture. He was an artist. He was a workman of the sort that has gone from us. He had been a "bound boy" for four years and then for another four years an apprentice. The furniture he made was a part of himself. He put his soul into it. In this bureau there were seventy-two tenons and seventy-two mortises, but not a metal screw or nail. The drawers were dovetailed together. Glue was used, and of such quality and so well used that the strong, tough wood would split and break before the glue yielded. This bureau has withstood during seventy-nine years the heat of an open, big fireplace only a few feet away; of stoves; and of steam pipes and radiators; and the joints are yet so tight that one must look closely indeed to be able to see them. It is veneered with real mahogany from Honduras, and the coloring is like that of some of the paintings of old masters. Two years ago a maker of furniture, an old man, of the old school, an artist, an honest workman who also was proud of his skill and its products, saw this bureau. He touched it gently, he passed his hand over it lightly, he gazed at its beauty of workmanship and of color, and the tears so filled his eyes he had to wipe them away. When, in 1855, the man who made furniture came with his wife and three little children from western Pennsylvania to western Illinois, the bureau was brought along. It came on the boat down the Ohio and up the Mississippi to Quincy, Illinois. Now it is treasured in an apartment in Chicago, larger than the little log cabin, and very different.

After some years a new roof was put on the cabin, a roof of real sawed shingles, a wonder, and then the rain and snow no longer came into the cabin.

But the floor remained as it was, and so did the walls. They were of large logs, from which the bark and a little of the wood had been hewn in patches — in patches only. There were cracks of irregular width between the logs, and in the widest places big slivers or small branches had been driven. Then all the open spaces were daubed full of mortar. It kept out the snow and the rain and the wind. It made the cabin less cold in winter. Always there were crevices and little holes about it, and these places were the homes of bugs and worms. The logs decayed slightly and this made their little homes all the more attractive to the bugs and worms. The little mother, so very little and worn and tired — she was not five feet tall and in all her life she never weighed one hundred pounds — disliked the sneaking bugs and worms; in fact, she was much afraid of them. When she saw them she shivered. She opposed them the best she could; and sought, not to exterminate them — she could never hope for that — but to keep down their number. But what she feared most was the snake that had its home under the flat rocks on which the mud-sills of the cabin rested. Some thought there were two snakes, or more, and likely there were, but more than one was seen only a few times. The little mother feared the snake might harm her babies. It is almost certain that it was a harmless "house snake," but nearly everyone thought that all snakes were poisonous. The little mother might be thought foolish for being so afraid of bugs and snakes, but she had never been in the country before. She was twenty-seven when she came to the log cabin home, and likely until then she had never seen a snake. The country was strange to her. She disliked and feared it — disliked and feared it when she lived in the log cabin, and to the end of her days; and she lived to be eighty-seven.

The lean-to was a ramshackle affair that just managed to hold up a roof of clapboards that kept off the hot sun quite well, but was poor protection from the rain. But then the rain was warm in the summer. The cook-stove was moved to the lean-to for the hot months, but the greater part of the year it was in the cabin. Then there was just room for the rather small dining-table (also made by the furniture-maker), which, fortunately, had a leaf at each side that folded down, so that it took up only one-third as much space as when the leaves were drawn up at meal time. That so much could be put into that one small room was marvelous.

Fortunately the clothing needed little space. Among the articles of clothing was one of the three things in the cabin that were always mysterious and never lost their absorbing interest to the children. This article was a tall, silk hat, called a "stovepipe" or "plug" hat. It was like those Abraham Lincoln and Judge Douglas wore when they spoke in "the Square" in Quincy. The father had worn it while he was a maker of furniture and had a shop in which were apprentices, journeymen, and master workmen, and he called his workmen by their first names and inquired about their wives and children when they were sick.

This was before the maker of furniture was sick for two years and his perforce unattended business had at last to be sacrificed; and he had then driven for months over the prairies of Illinois and Iowa, in a buck-board, to get some measure of health. He had paid every cent he owed, and had brought his family and goods to western Illinois, and he had left $2800 in gold. He and the little mother were accustomed to high silk hats, for he was a "Pittsburgh man," as he would say with pride, and she was a Philadelphia girl; but to the children the hat was an object so strange, so unreal, so marvelous, that they looked at it with awe when, on rare occasions, they persuaded the father to put it on. He laughed in an odd way when he did that; and the little mother laughed until the tears ran down her cheeks, only her face did not look as it did when she laughed at other times. She loved the city, where there were such hats, and it had, she felt sure, gone from her forever. She lived for sixty years after she left the city, and always, many times, she said that she was so glad that John said that heaven was a city, with paved streets. She was happy the moment her feet, so little and dainty always, were on a pavement.

The other marvelous things in the cabin were the father's open-faced silver watch and his long rifle. The watch was kept in one of the small drawers of the bureau. The key that wound it was beside it. It was a notable Sunday when the father was persuaded to wind the watch and each child could hold it very carefully and put it against an ear to hear it tick. The child's heart almost stopped beating, mostly because it would be an unbearable catastrophe if the watch were dropped and broken. But the father was careful to hold fast to the long, narrow black braid with the gold clasp that was fastened to the watch and which the father put over his head, for it was made into a long loop, when he showed the children how he wore the watch. But he never wore it after The Boy was born. He would hold it in his hand and look at it for half an hour, not saying a word and his look was far away. He said often that when he first came to live in the log-cabin and to work alone in the fields he carried the watch, for four or five years, and he thought he would have gone crazy if it had not been for the watch.

The rifle (it was a Lancaster County rifle, such as Emerson Hough wrote about) was incredibly long in fact as well as in seeming to the children. It was kept above the door. The father was very proud of this rifle. He killed squirrels with it. Once he shot a wild turkey that was more than a hundred yards away, and on the other side of a Virginia rail fence, hence could not be well seen. The rifle was carefully cleaned and oiled as often as it was shot. To clean and oil it was a matter of much importance and more ceremony. Even rags were far from plentiful and those used in cleaning the rifle must be of a certain sort and were carefully put away each time and as carefully brought forth when it was decided that the rifle should be cleaned. It was fortunate for all parties if the children were not in the cabin when the rifle was cleaned; for if they were, they were so interested and curious and prying that they were constantly in the way, and were frequently punched by the long ramrod, or they sat down on a needed rag, or spilled the grease, or knocked over the little box of bullets. The powder was safe, for it was in the horn that the father's grandfather had carried in Washington's Army and in the War of 1812; and today that horn is one of the treasured possessions of The Boy. Beside it is the bullet-mould of the same ancestor. If cleaning the gun were a serious ceremony, loading it became a solemn one. First the powder was carefully measured and put in the rifle, and pressed down gently, but firmly, by the ramrod, now equipped with its loading end. Then a wadding of soft cloth, carefully cut, was rammed down on top of the powder with extreme care. Then the bullet was greased, and the grease wiped off carefully, and then it was put on top of the wadding. Then another wadding, carefully cut and folded, was rammed down hard on top of the bullet. It was then that the father closed one eye and screwed up his face and drove the ramrod home with nearly all his strength, flinging it down the barrel of the rifle. But the most solemn, the most ticklish, the all-important, part was to come. That was to work some fine powder into the minute channel that ran through the tubular "post," one end of which reached to the powder in the rifle barrel, while the other was covered by the fulminating cap. Now came the crowning event. Now hold your breath tight, children! For the cap must be pressed down over the end of the post, firmly, securely, yet it must not be exploded. That is to be done by the hammer's falling on it when the trigger is pulled. . . . At times the cap was placed, the hammer was raised, and one of the children was allowed to pull the trigger — before the rifle was loaded. The explosion of the cap made a quick, sharp, rather low report, there was at times a tiny spurt of flame, and then a slowly expanding and ascending minute cloud of smoke. It was all very exciting. The Boy must have been all of three years old before he could pull the trigger without shutting his eyes.

THE OUTDOORS

Near the door stood two straight, tall oak trees. They towered far above the cabin, their branches comparatively short, yet so long that the cabin was well shaded. The big trunks were scarcely more than three feet from the cabin wall and a friend who came occasionally, sometimes wearing the blue suit such as he had worn at Shiloh and Missionary Ridge, would amuse The Boy by bracing one foot against a tree and another against the cabin wall and thus would climb to the cabin roof. The Boy loved all trees. He imagined that they talked and that each tree spoke in a way different from all other trees. To him every tree had a personality. It has been so with him to this day. And with each year he has the more loved a tree and the woods, if that be possible.

It was the distance of perhaps fifty yards from the cabin to the highway, always called " the road." The path to the highway ran diagonally, hence it was quite a journey to the big gate in the high post-and-rail fence along the road. But almost every day that The Boy was allowed to be out of doors — and he was denied the out-of-doors only when the weather was very bad, or he was sick — he ran to the gate, declaring that he was about to run away. His mother pretended to be very much alarmed. She knew that he would not go into the highway. He would look through the gate, but often he saw hogs with little ones in the road and he knew that a mother hog with little pigs was a dangerous animal. And often there were cattle in the road, and he was afraid of them. He never feared a horse. He loved to stroke the horse's nose and pat its neck. He had miraculous escapes from under the feet of horses, but Providence, or horse sense, saved him from being hurt. He has always thought it was horse sense. He has never been able to believe in a Providence that is concerned with a sickly, timid, question-asking little boy. A horse is a very knowing animal. It knows more in three minutes about a new driver or rider than the driver or rider learns about it in a week. The horses knew that The Boy loved them.

The Boy did run away, not in the highway, but all over the little sixty-acre farm. More than once he was lost, hopelessly lost, in the tall corn. He had the wanderlust. Always it has possessed him. When he could, in later life, he wandered many miles, many thousands of them, but they were never weary to him, though he could not have any of the luxuries and could have only a few of the comforts of travel; and his wanderlust taught him that it is not necessary to have three meals a day, if only one is seeing mountains and lakes and woods and prairies and rivers and people that one has not seen before. The Wandering Jew might be much worse off. And civilization is a fraud. It takes away more than it gives. Adventure is the abiding, highest happiness.

The cabin was built about 1850. It remained standing for nearly twenty-five years. In it only one child was born — The Boy. In it no one ever died or was married. That was remarkable, for in that country in those days people married young, and life was so harsh to the women that some men married two or three times; and many children were born and one-third of them died before they were six years old. The cabin was on a farm of very poor land. The Boy's father paid far too much for the land. Until he was "settled" he had incurred a debt that was a mountainous hardship for years, for he knew nothing of farming or farm land. He selected the hilly, timbered land, because it was like the land he had seen in Pennsylvania. The timber was of the sort that indicated a poor soil; but he did not know this when he bought. There was much "pin oak," and also "hazel brush." The father was not yet well, but the doctors in Pennsylvania had been so certain that on an Illinois farm, with the wonderful Illinois air, the sick man would soon fully recover his health, that there was Hope, if not much more, in the little cabin. The furniture-maker made the most ridiculous mistakes in his farming. He had brought all the way from Pennsylvania two fine horses; but he could not harness them. Their shoulders and the collars would not fit: he had seen a collar slipped over a horse's head, but had not observed that it was at once turned halfway around. When sent to give small corn its first cultivation with the "single diamond" then universally used, he did not know how to throw the furrow away from the corn: he had seen corn hoed, and that brought the earth toward it, hence he used his "single diamond" to throw the dirt toward the corn and of course he covered it up in spite of all that he could do.

THE LITTLE MOTHER

THE little mother knew no more of farming than he did. When her beans came above the surface, apparently with the seed that she had planted held aloft, she went in perplexity to a neighbor, to inquire if she should turn the plants upside down and replant them. When she had a hen hatch some duck eggs, as instructed by a neighbor, and the ducklings ran to a pool, she knew they would be drowned and waded into the pool to their rescue.

She had not been accustomed to hard work. As a girl she had enjoyed the advantages of riches. Her ancestors were of the old nobility of France. No wonder that The Boy can remember her in the cabin as only so very worn and pale and wrinkled and sad. If it were told how hard was life in the cabin, it would scarce be believed by anyone that may ever read this; for the conditions of those days have passed away. They do not exist anywhere in the United States, not even in the nooks and coves. To most of the neighbors and to the father life was less intolerable, for they were accustomed to pioneering or came of pioneer stock. The little mother that so loved the town, to which she was accustomed, came to hate the country, that was so merciless to her. As she looked out of the cabin, she could see only corn, no matter in what direction she looked. To her it became the ugliest, the most hateful, of all plants. She was deeply religious; she had the blessed old faith that could not be moved; but I feel sure that if John had seen the new Jerusalem as a farm in the Corn Belt, the little mother would have taken her chances in another location. She was orthodox, but was much more certain that heaven was a happy place than that hell was anything like the revivalists pictured it. Of French Huguenot lineage, she had been reared among Quakers, in her 'teens she had bought and read and reread the books of William Ellery Channing, and she loved always to read Whittier.

The most distinct memory The Boy has of the little mother in the cabin is of her walking back and forth as she ironed sheets and other articles, bringing them from a basket in the lean-to, and singing:

> Rock of Ages, cleft for me;

and

> Jesus, lover of my soul.

When he was almost forty, he spent some hours one Sunday at the Auld Kirk in which Tam O'Shanter had seen the witches dance and in the graveyard around it and in wandering along the Doon: and he strayed into the New Kirk for services. The first hymn was "What a Friend We Have in Jesus"; and then came "Rock of Ages, cleft for me," and the kirk and the people faded away and he was again in the little log cabin and he could see the worn, tired, sad face of the little mother — and he was awakened and brought back to the New Kirk when "Jesus, lover of my soul" was announced, and he hopes that the hard-faced minister did not see his tears. . . . His mother could not "carry a tune." She had no voice for singing. In all his life he never heard her sing anything save those two hymns. He never heard her sing after she left the cabin.

"This country is all right for men and dogs," said the Old Settler; "but it is hell for women and horses."

It must not be thought that there was ever in the log cabin such poverty as was and is now common in the city, or any approach to that poverty. The food was substantial, although dainties were rare; and always there was an abundance of it, although at times the menu was short indeed.

The father's feeling for gardening would not be understood if it were written that he had a strong liking for it; it is necessary to say that he loved it. Almost at once the little mother also became a famous gardener. The father was a good and enthusiastic orchardist. The apple orchard of the sixty-acre farm was just beginning to bear when that farm was sold; but there was a great abundance of fine peaches — so many that they were sold by the wagon-load. Most were sold to men who drove for them all the way from western Missouri. Some came from southwestern Missouri, and insisted on having the peaches green, else they would be spoiled by the long trip. Now it is said that "peaches cannot be grown in western Illinois," and the people there get their peaches from southwestern Missouri! There were wild fruits to be had; and the family never lacked for meats. There was one food never served in the log cabin, although eaten frequently by the neighbors — Indian corn. The little mother, so positively French in all things, disliked corn as an article of food for human beings even more than the French of today dislike it. Later the dislike lessened; but in all her life she made little corn into food for her family. She almost never made corn bread, or corn pone. Oftener she made corn cakes. At rare intervals her family had mush and milk. Oftener it had fried mush. When the log cabin had been left behind, and hard times — low prices for farm products, high taxes and high interest rates following the panic of 1873 — again made economies necessary, the " shorts " from the grist mill were sometimes mixed with flour, for bread and biscuits. Even then the little mother could rarely humiliate herself by preparing any dish of corn for the table. It should be stated that the " shorts " of the day of the old stone grinding grist mill, with its faulty "bolting cloth" and the other crudities of the manufacture of flour, was not a poor adulterant. It was palatable and full of nourishment. And those that ate it were not troubled with an ailment common nowadays, especially among those of sedentary habits.

Thanks largely to the ingenuity and industry of the little mother, at no time did the family lack any clothing necessary to comfort, although once she found it advisable to cut up two of the fine woolen blankets of prosperous days, to make stockings; but that was always referred to as the time of greatest financial stress, and there were several fine woolen blankets left. There was none of the poverty that comes of lack of skill or industry. Of the necessaries of life there was no lack; of the comforts of life there were more than are possessed by millions of the people of the United States today; of the luxuries of life there were almost none — here the children were fortunate in their ignorance, for they could not regret the things of which they did not know; but the parents were not in this wise fortunate.

The hardship of the life of the family in the little cabin came, not from lack of food or clothing, but from the overburden of hard work and the lack of facilities for making work easier, especially the lack of those things well called " household conveniences." It was this last which made the lot of the little mother so hard; which made her work so great.

How did she ever manage to do it all? — all the housework for six; the washing and ironing and cooking and baking and the thousand other tasks. And the work had to be done in such a hard way. To get a dependable well it was necessary to dig one at least sixty feet deep, and that, with the walling of it, was beyond the purse of a poor man; and then the water had to be brought up with a rope and bucket and windlass — hard work indeed. A little water was caught from the cabin roof when it rained; but for some years almost all the water used had to be carried nearly one hundred yards up a rather steep grade from the "spring." How much that meant to the little mother! For the father was busy in the poor fields, or in clearing another acre, or in working for some neighbor. Day after day, week after week, year after year, the little mother did her work. It was miraculous. Of course there is just the one explanation of her superhuman strength and endurance: mother love. It is that which explains, and that alone that can explain, the lives of so many mothers. O little mother, your love was immeasurable; your dauntless, unconquerable, all-seeing, all-understanding mother love!

Years of care and worry and overwork during the sickness and first convalescence of her husband, and five years of life in the log cabin, were not a happy preparation for motherhood, and when The Boy was born he came into the world sick, and little good health was his lot for years. He was thirty-five before good health following a long attack of typhoid fever brought him to realize that up to that time he had probably never known what it was to be really well. He was small, nervous, restless, doubtless irritating, but never once in all his life did the little mother lose patience with him. It seemed as if his stomach, at least, and generally some other organs, were at odds with everything, and the result was much discomfort and sometimes acute pain. Never once when pain awoke him from troubled sleep was that little mother not bending over him, sympathy and pity on her tired, worn face! How did she know that the pain would awaken him? When did she sleep — she whose work took so many busy hours? And in the night, when she must have been weary beyond words, she would soothe and comfort him by the hour! "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." We dare not contradict or amend, but The Boy would have said that no other human being can have love as great as the love of the mother that lives such a life as his mother lived for her child.

The war meant much to the father and the mother in the little cabin. For generations the ancestors of both, beginning in Switzerland and France, had striven and fought for blessed Liberty. For Liberty they had been persecuted and impoverished and exiled and even murdered. Both the father and the mother loved Liberty with a fanatical affection. They borrowed money paying from twelve to eighteen per cent interest and gave it to that war charity and this war relief, and some of it to the fund to pay for "substitutes" for drafted men with families. If the father could not fight, they could give. They did not buy bonds: they gave. One day during the war word came that the father's youngest brother, riding into the smoke of the fiercest of the fighting of the Wilderness, at the head of his regiment, had not been seen again. His riderless horse was found, but his body was never recognized. But that did not sadden the father so much as the news that came another day that his favorite nephew, a favorite of everyone who knew him, so young and boyish that he was known in his regiment as "the lady," had been killed at Lookout Mountain. He was so kind, mirthful, and ambitious, it seemed too hard to bear that he had died, though he had "died gloriously on the field of battle." But after a time the news of death or wounds or capture did not seem so terrible. Sensibilities were dulled, souls were weary, even death lost some of its terrors.

THE BOY'S PLAYTHINGS

THE brother, regularly, and sometimes the sisters, had to work in the fields as soon as they were six years old, or when even younger to run errands and wipe dishes and bring stovewood and chips from the woodpile. The work in the field was far too hard for children of their age; but conditions were not soft for anyone. The elders worked very hard; and it was the rule for young children to be put to work in the field or near the house. The children in the log cabin were never seriously ill. And they found time for play. They were sent to school when they were six years old and there was play time there. More than that, the mother provided a surprising amount of recreation. Fortunately, not much that is intricate or unusual is required to amuse us when we are yet young children. The imagination is then active. The Boy had make-believe farm animals. He had a wonderful array of stick horses. They were like the horses he had seen. Each had its peculiarities and a name. Some were slow and lazy, but the majority were skittish and treacherous, and required a great deal of command in a loud voice. These fractious horses had a way of throwing their rider frequently and were altogether a bad lot. But the more a horse kicked and the oftener it threw its rider the better The Boy liked it. He cannot recall that his brother paid any attention to these horses or had any of his own; but the brother was seven years the older and that made a great difference. When one is three and the other ten there is a great gulf between them, at least between the ten year old and the three year old; and this gulf is not much diminished when the ages become twelve and five. The older brother's work in the field was so hard — so hard that only the most cruel necessity could justify it — that he was nearly always too tired to play. The Boy was especially rich in swine. This was doubtless because his swine were pebbles and if the little farm was rich in anything it was pebbles. A pebble of almost any size, shape, or color could readily be found. Large pebbles made the mother hogs and the pebbles of different sizes made the pigs of various ages. Red hogs were unknown to that neighborhood at that time, but The Boy found such beautiful red pebbles that he could not do otherwise than stock several pens with red swine. But the right color was white, or black-and-white, and these, particularly the black-and-white, were not easy to find. The Boy remembers distinctly his favorite sow, although he cannot remember her name except that it was Old something. She was a very large black-and-white pebble. Once she was lost and he was disconsolate until she was found and was returned to her large litter of black-and-white pigs, very highly prized because of their color. He had no cattle. He does not know why. But he feared the cattle in the highway and he cannot remember distinctly more than the one cow on the little farm. This cow was kept all the years The Boy was on the little farm. She had the well-chosen name of Old Baldy. She was a beautiful red except her white face, and she was a fairly good milker, except that she "went dry" for a much longer period than a well-bred cow should. But then she was not well-bred; she was only a "scrub." No one in that neighborhood had ever seen a pure-bred or even a well-bred cow. Sometimes when Old Baldy went dry it was a rather serious matter, for then there was no milk or butter for the family. The one tree-fruit abundantly yielded by the farm was the peach. The people in that neighborhood had heard of canning fruits, but that was beyond the people on the little farm as it was beyond nearly all people in the early sixties. Quantities of peaches were dried by breaking the "free stones" open and slicing the "clings" and spreading them in the sun. The roof of the ash-hopper or of the lean-to was used; and sometimes some boards laid on trestles. Always the drying peaches had to be watched, else the chickens and some birds would peck and eat them. Chickens were very fond indeed of ripe peaches. Watching the peaches was a very tiresome job for one of the children; but even it allowed opportunity for play. One could play that the chickens were fierce animals come to eat the little children on the boards or the low roof of the lean-to, and armed with a wooden sword or gun he could charge these cruel animals and drive them away. And he could erect forts and mount cannon (stove-wood) and in this way protect the children. Now, these dried peaches, stewed, furnished by their juice a good substitute for butter.

Perhaps The Boy's biggest job in connection with his stock raising was riding the horses twice a day to the spring already mentioned, to water them. When one considers the distance from the cabin to the spring, that the going was not on the level, and that he had at least twenty horses, it will be seen that The Boy was of a very conscientious sort, to see to it that the horses did not suffer from thirst. Further, only a few of the horses could be walked, peaceably, to and from the spring. Nearly all were so fractious that they had to be taken on a dead run, with much tugging at the reins, and with many " breaks " into the fields of corn near by.

THE BOY'S CLOTHING

THE BOY cannot recollect that the little mother ever complained, but his rides must have added much to her laundering, for he was frequently thrown by a horse, and this happened whether the ground was very dusty or very muddy. He now thinks, although he never thought about it or much else then, that the little mother must have spent much of her time on his scant wardrobe, so often did he come in full length contact with the muddy or dusty ground and so very often did he tear his clothes. He surely was very careless and reckless — but what boy is otherwise? — so often did he come in from play with a long rent in waist or trousers. Yet the little mother did not complain. That was never her way. She was always kind and patient. Only once can he recall that she showed the least indication of annoyance or disposition to find fault. He was made a pair of white trousers. The boys wore long trousers then. A boy could have nothing finer in that neighborhood in those days than a pair of white trousers. And the first time The Boy wore his, and his recollection is that it was also the last time, he got them hopelessly grass-stained. He remembers distinctly the green on the knees.

But rents and grime and stains were only a part of the woe that could be traced to The Boy's clothing. He was everlastingly losing every article of his clothing that could possibly be lost. He had a hat somewhere for summer, a tattered straw hat; while the fact of its existence was known, its whereabouts rarely was. But that did not matter much, for there was no need of a hat unless one went to church, and it was not much needed then. In the winter The Boy had a cap and it was this which was so bothersome. How often he vowed that when he was grown he would never wear, or own, a cap! In the winter a cap had to be worn; and how could it be worn unless it was found? Being a boy, he never could find anything that he was sent to find. The little mother had most often to find his lost cap. That cap was surely "possessed!" Once the quest for it seemed only to prove that it could not be found. Then someone noticed a place at the woodpile where the chips seemed to be unusually thick, and pleased at the promise of nice chips so easily scooped up, hurried to gather them, and the cap was found under a four-inch layer of chips. Such mysterious things as that happened frequently to the cap. And as sure as the cap was in one of the fifty places where it might be, the jacket was lost. His clothes were a great bother to The Boy; not, dear reader, as you might think, because they were lost, but because he had them; for, as he reasoned, if he did not have them, they would not get lost.

Of course, the articles of his clothing that gave The Boy the most discomfort were his shoes. He was dead sure that his feet were hot when he was compelled to put on his shoes because the weather was cold. True, there had been heavy frosts for a dozen mornings and the water was frozen in the puddles and the little creeks; and it did feel good to stand on the warm grass bed from which the cow had just awkwardly arisen; yet those feet did not get of a proper temperature in shoes until about Christmas time, when Santa Claus was supposed to have his eye on good boys and Old Bellsnickle was watching the bad boys. And how eagerly the first signs of spring were watched for — the first green grass in the sunny fence corner, the sprouting of the horse radish, Father oiling the harness, and other sure signs that a boy could go barefoot! Sorrow of sorrows, those signs were never considered sufficient by the little mother until days and days and days had passed! But at last one was permitted to put the bare feet on the grass that tickled for a day or so and on the bare earth that *was* a little cold and then to slip down to the bank of the creek and have the delicious sensation of the mud coming up between one's toes! There are some hapless mortals that are richly entitled to profound sympathy. At the head of the list is the boy that never went barefoot. His sister that always had to wear shoes is not far down the list.

For once necessity ministered to happiness, for shoes for the summer could hardly have been afforded. It was a matter for congratulation if the feet could be kept warm in winter. They were; and The Boy has no recollection of ever having suffered from cold in the log-cabin years. The farm furnished fuel and doubtless in sufficient quantity. But the first year the family were on it there was no wagon and the father had to drag from the woods all the fuel used.

The Boy spent a little more than five years in the log-cabin home. He was a happy boy. He cannot remember that he was ever once scolded. His parents never struck one of their children. His mother had the greatest contempt and dislike of those who whipped children. The Boy had a care-free, busy, joyous life. He had an abundance of play. He had all the playthings he could employ, all that he needed, and they did not cost a cent of money. He had all the clothes he needed for comfort — and what normal boy cares for more? Or for any? His clothes brought him his only care and concern. He had bread and meat and potatoes and vegetables and some fruits and hazel nuts. The lack of these things — food and clothing and shelter — will bring sorrow; but the abundance of them may not bring happiness. The greatest agent and influence in bringing happiness into the life of The Boy was the little mother and her love. It is possible that others may have had as good a mother, but no one could ever have a better mother. She was confronted by a multitude of cares and worries and hardships, by endless work, by the lack of so much of comfort and convenience, by anxiety and sometimes misunderstanding or lack of understanding, and The Boy had all the lack of appreciation and comprehension that is to be expected of a boy until he is five, and even older; but never once was she unkind in word or act; never once was her care forgetful, never once was her love insufficient to smooth the path and minister fully to the welfare of her children. Never in all the world since the world began, a braver or more tender heart than hers! O dauntless heart! O deathless love!

THE LITTLE MOTHER

From a photograph made when she was nearly seventy

CHAPTER II

THE BOY FINDS HIMSELF

THE OLD PASSES

WHEN The Boy was five years of age, a great, a revolutionary change came to pass.

The cause of this was the sale of the sixty-acre hazel-brush and pin-oak farm, with the log cabin, and the purchase of a farm, nearly twice as large, some twenty miles away, with a "frame" house (!) of two stories (!!) painted white (!!!). It was a famous farmhouse in that day, the best for miles, having been built by a rich man.

Only one thing of all the new house was a reminder of the old: a big fireplace.

The new home did not have any hazel nuts. It had hickory nuts, the best of which were "shell-barks." It had them in abundance. And it had a few walnuts. All the original Virginia rail fence of the farm had been of walnut. The walnut trees had been made into rails because the trunks were straight and split easily. Since those walnut trees were cut they would have brought, could they have been sold "on the stump," a dozen times the price of the land.

How The Boy and his brother (big, for he was twelve years of age) and his two sisters gathered those hickory nuts! They had scarcely seen a hickory nut before. The four children gathered hickory nuts until the store for the first winter and for each of the several winters following must have been several bushels. They were a most palatable and wholesome addition to the bill of fare.

The fireplace reminded The Boy and the others of the old home because the hickory nuts were cracked on the hearth of the fireplace of the new home as the hazel nuts had been cracked on the hearth of the old home. Thousands of hickory nuts cracked on the hearth of the new home had made several small cavities that were helpful, for they made it easier so to hold the nut that when cracked the two halves of the kernel could be taken out entire.

The fireplace of the new home being the only reminder of the old one, it was inevitable that there should be a radical change in The Boy (and in consequence in his life). The change was this: The Boy found Himself. No longer was he The Boy. He was Himself. As the author has considered what he should write, has called up memories of his early years; save for half a dozen occurrences all the things that he can remember of his life in the old log cabin home, seem aloof; as if they were not in the life of the author when he was young, but in the life of an almost impersonal boy, if a boy can be at all impersonal; and certainly a strange boy; the author, yet not the author. I regard this boy without feeling. His mother I love and always have loved, with a love that my widest horizon could never compass, however ill I may have shown that love; but The Boy — I do not like or dislike him. I see him moving about the sixty-acre farm; in the log cabin home; running up to the highway gate with a threat to run away; tending his pens of play pigs; riding his stick horses to water; bruising his soles and smashing his toes; losing his cap almost everywhere; getting his leg fast between two puncheons of the cabin floor; pulling the trigger, with tightly shut eyes, to explode the "fulminating cap" on his father's long rifle: all these things I recall without feeling, without the least acceleration of pulse. I know that I was that boy, but I can not have what the good, old-fashioned Methodists termed "a realizing sense" of it. That is why in what I have written of life in the log cabin home I have spoken of The Boy. Beginning with the life in the new home I will write of myself.

I remember that good Mrs. Starr brought my mother and me to the new home in her carriage, and a carriage was a wonderful thing in western Illinois in 1865; and that as soon as the carriage was stopped near the house I jumped out and ran up on the porch and into the house and saw an open door at the foot of a staircase. (I cannot remember ever having seen a stairway before.)

The things of the first five years of my life of which my remembrance is exceptional, as above stated, are so few as to be significant; and on that account as well as their nature, they are not without interest.

I had a little wagon that my father had made with all the care and skill of the long-trained, old-fashioned, artistic craftsman. It was not a large wagon; but I was only three years of age and puny. The wheels of this wagon were scarce eight inches in diameter; the body about eighteen inches long by eight wide and four deep. Unfortunately, the wood used for the bottom of the body was not seasoned, and a wide crack appeared from one end to the other.

There was a church of the United Brethren some miles away, which my family attended. At the time of which I write the minister who rode the circuit on which this church was located was a godly man, rich in good works and cheery words, and the love of the people; and poor in all else. He went about whistling or singing. He was a great favorite. And he dearly loved children. There have not been many as good as he.

He came to call at the log cabin one day when I had carefully packed the body of the wagon with sand and left it in the path that led to the cabin door.

My father was a man of violent temper, but not once did I ever hear him take the name of his Maker in vain. His awful, last-resort swear-word was "Dast."

Reverend Rankin, the good minister, stopped to admire my wagon. He picked it up, somewhat carelessly, and the sand began to run out. He set the wagon down hastily, and the jolt made the catastrophe complete. He said nothing; and entered the cabin. He and my dear mother talked. The door was ajar.

I had concluded to resume operations with the wagon. I saw what had occurred. I yelled as loud as I could, " What dast fool has spilled my sand ? "

That was the cause of more than one hearty laugh to be credited to the Reverend Mr. Rankin. At the time my dear mother laughed until the tears came into her eyes. Because of that I'm glad it occurred, for she did not laugh often. I remember very distinctly how she and the parson laughed; and I remember myself as myself.

Again I have always remembered distinctly a great hubbub in the highway, shouting and singing, the noise of drums, fifes and horns, and the sound of men chopping. Then began a long procession of wagons, to each of which was hitched at least four horses, and in which were men, some making noise with drum or fife or horn or by yelling or singing, and in every wagon a man splitting logs into rails. It was the presidential campaign of 1864, and the Railsplitter was to be re-elected. After the wagons came three carriages in which were men wearing coats and high silk hats. They were prominent officials, orators, who would talk to all the people in this procession and in many others, in all some thousands of women and children and men, who would assemble for the grand rally. I was allowed to sit on one of the big gate-posts and wave at the men. My mother waved her handkerchief at them and they swung their caps and cheered her. It was more than half an hour of intense excitement, and then the tired, worn little mother walked slowly back to the cabin, where always there was so much work to do.

ANOTHER WAR MEMORY

Of the occurrences of the log cabin life, none is more distinctly remembered than my father riding away on his spirited horse, with his long rifle in his hand, and my mother standing at the window with tears on her face — and she so rarely cried; at least when anyone could see her.

When I was a year old, disappointment and the battle of Bull Run had made the North aware that it faced a real war. My father had been a Democrat until he heard Lincoln speak. He was a strong Union man and came of a stock that had always done its full share of fighting. Twice the examining board pronounced him physically unfit for military service. And more, he had so few teeth he could not bite open the tough paper cylinder that had to be torn before it could be put in the musket. The little farm was near Missouri. There was very bitter feeling. The Missouri "bushwhackers," unattached and generally lawless mounted troopers, would steal across the river, and when they returned they took with them the horses, cattle, and goods of the Union people on the Illinois side. Sometimes the bushwhackers burned a building for amusement. The copperhead snake was hated and feared even more than the rattlesnake. The rattlesnake gave warning, and was no more deadly. The Southern sympathizers were called Copperheads. A few miles from the cabin was a Copperhead "fort," where some lazy or adventurous young hoodlums had gathered with some conscientious men up to a total of more than a hundred at times, to drill and to annoy the Union people. A quarter of a century after, I became well acquainted with the "surgeon" of this "fort." For four years our office suites adjoined and were connected by a door. This ex-Missourian was a fine man. He told me much about this fort and the life in it. The young doctor was, at the time of the fort, very much in earnest. When he was old his activity and feeling during those years of the fort had mellowed into a joke. The Union people had an organization known as the "Home Guard." In some places there was need of it because of the Copperheads and the Knights of the Golden Circle and the bushwhackers. In a good many places, where there was no need of a Home Guard, it was formed, so the Copperheads said, by those too cowardly to join the army and fight; and these Copperheads called the Home Guard the Dog-Fennel Militia. The dog-fennel (May weed or heath aster) was a weed that grew at the roadside. It was not very bothersome, yet it was the most despised of all the weeds. If it had any friend, it was the hog. The dog-fennel was not eaten by any animal; but hogs apparently liked to lie in it. It spread out near the ground. It would hide a man lying on his belly. When the Copperheads called their enemies the Dog-Fennel Militia they made a very good return of an opprobrious name.

My father belonged to the Home Guard where it was needed. One very early morning, while it was yet dark, I was awakened by a commotion in the log cabin. I, too, went to stand at the window. My mother lifted me up. Fowler was a hamlet three miles away. Later two excited neighbors came with the news. The Missouri bushwhackers had robbed the store. It was well known that the storekeeper was a Union man, and the bushwhackers would have burned his house and probably have shot him had it not been for the pleadings of his sick daughter. The bushwhackers had not gone toward Missouri, but had passed near our home to raid the town of Mendon. Mendon had been founded by people from Mendon, Mass. It was vociferously Unionist. It was rich. It had good stores. And Mendon prairie was the richest farming territory for many, many miles. It was bold, reckless, to attempt to rob Mendon; but the prize was very rich, and Mendon was hated above every other town or hamlet within fifty miles by the Southern sympathizers. There were no telephones. Horsemen rode from one farm to another. My father did not wait for his breakfast. His rifle was always in good order. It carried a big bullet that did frightful execution. When a big steer was to be butchered that bullet killed him so suddenly that " he dropped in his tracks." As my father rode away in the gray of the morning, he rode a mare of which any man might well have been proud — one of the two brought from Pennsylvania. She was an extremely well built, spirited, tireless black. My father was very proud of her. My mother loved her. One of the very few times that I saw my mother cry during the five long, grinding, ill-luck years of my life in the cabin, was when this mare died. A careless driver of the "horse-power" of a threshing machine allowed her, spirited, designed for "arms and the chase," to become so overheated that she died in a few hours.

At Mendon there was a little battle. The bushwhackers got the worst of it. They escaped there, but were surrounded some miles away. Two of them were captured and a member of the Home Guard, a very popular man, was mortally wounded. As he was dying the two prisoners were hung from the limb of a large tree; where, some said, the dying man could see them. The fighting was over before the man on the black mare and his near neighbors reached the battlefield. None the less did he ride away carrying the long rifle; none the less did the black mare throw up her head and arch her neck; none the less did a little, worn woman look out of the window with tears on her cheeks; and none the less did a little boy see the woman and the man and the horse and the rifle.

Against these occurrences in which I have always distinctly recognized myself and three or four others like them in this particular, are the many other chapters and paragraphs of my log cabin life, in which I am only The Boy, although my recollection of the events is distinct.

I know that it was my most frequent diversion, almost from the time that I could talk, to play the preacher. I was familiar with the simple Protestant church service of that time and place — the old hymns "lined out" by the minister; extemporaneous prayer; an earnest, unlearned sermon. I do not recall any church service that I attended as long as the log cabin was our home, although I must have been taken to many services. I cannot recall any church, any pulpit, any minister or any other person within a church, until after I left the log cabin. But I can remember very distinctly that often in the log cabin I put the Bible and the hymn book on the seat of a chair, which served me as a pulpit; and sang and prayed and preached vociferously to the capacity of my lungs and vocal cords, the amusement of my parents, especially my mother, and the disgust and derision of my brother and sisters. I certainly began this preaching before I was four years of age. The desire to preach was not inherited. I can trace my ancestry back for hundreds of years, and there never was a preacher in the direct line on either side.

TRUE TO FORM

It was the region and the time of steel knives. Silver table tools were unknown. Some years later the very richest got Rogers' silver-plated knives, forks and spoons, to be brought out on state occasions. (It was about this time that white sugar was losing its standing as a wonder.) When my mother was married she was given a fine set of steel knives and forks. These were used only when we had real folks for company. One day these knives and forks all disappeared. My mother hunted and hunted and hunted for them. My brother and sisters joined zealously in the search. I was questioned, accused, questioned, accused. No results but denials. My mother was distressed. My father was vexed. No one had been about the cabin to steal those precious knives and forks. Another table article which my mother prized was the castor. That was an absolutely necessary table article in those days. It had to be in the center of the table. It had a horizontal part that revolved around the ornate standard. In this horizontal part were holes in which fitted the cruets for vinegar, salt, pepper, oil, etc. — these cruets being all alike. In those days, also, the vinegar was made at home. A barrel or keg of cider was allowed to turn into vinegar. My family had a ten-gallon keg in which the cider was put to be converted into vinegar. It was in the lean-to, bung up. A supply of vinegar was kept in a gallon jug. From this the cruet was filled. Some time after the steel knives and forks had disappeared it was necessary to fill the vinegar jug; and when the vinegar was allowed to run from the keg into a pan, one of the lost knives came out. Ultimately — it required a great deal of effort — all the missing knives and forks were taken from the keg; and all had been eaten into and ruined by the strong vinegar. There was only one dissenting voice to the proposition that The Boy had put the knives and forks into the vinegar keg. The evidence all pointed to him. He was continually doing such things. No one else would have the devilish ingenuity and patience required to get the bung out of the keg and back again. No one else would be so debased and criminal as to think of putting the " company set " of steel knives and forks into the vinegar keg; and if someone else had thought of such a crime, no one else would have been black-hearted enough to do it. The Boy neither denied nor confessed. Likely he did not remember. He went so rapidly from one deviltry to another that he could not be expected to remember them. At this hour he does not know whether or not he put the knives and forks into the keg. He thinks that he did. But this is based altogether on circumstantial evidence. He has not the least recollection of having done it, and he cannot remember that he even had the least recollection of having done it.

THE SECOND FLOOR

I HAVE mentioned the open door at the foot of the stairway in the new home.

In this new home there was a large bedroom above the large kitchen. A stovepipe reached from the kitchen stove up through the ceiling of the kitchen and the floor of the bedroom and then on up through the ceiling of the bedroom to a brick flue that rested on the garret floor — flue within the garret and chimney above the roof. (We always made that distinction between the part below and the part above the roof, being just a little more particular than the dictionary.) There was a tin drum to protect the ceiling and the floor from the hot stovepipe. Those that had occupied the house had taken their stovepipe with them. The stairway I had seen led to this room above the kitchen. Of course I ran up the stairway. As I reached the head of the stairs and looked around I saw first of all the hole in the floor. I approached it. And then — O gods of all marvels, wonders, miracles, fable, discovery! I came near writing that I stood in awe. It was more than awe! It comprehended awe and very much more. I ventured nearer and nearer. I was near the edge. By bending over I could look down and see someone in the kitchen. I shrank back, then grew bolder. Something that I had never realized ever existed; a second story, had come into my life! Talk about the emotion of "some watcher of the skies when a new planet swims into his ken," or of that villainous *conquistador* perched upon a peak of Darien! And who, I once thought, should by priority be Balboa and not "stout Cortez"; for certainly Balboa was the first to discover the Pacific there. But perhaps Balboa would have cluttered up the metre and likely Keats knew no more history then he knew Greek or surgery. When I saw that hole in a second story floor my soul was alive and began to grow!

(I crept down stairs as noiselessly as I could. I went out into the yard. I gazed at the building, that house on top of a house. Never again could I be so incredulous and astounded. Anything could happen after that!)

CHAPTER III

SETTLERS AND SETTLER WAYS

THE FIRST SETTLERS

IT WAS near Mendon, Adams County, Illinois, that I was born on August 24, 1860. Settlers had come to west central Illinois, in which Mendon is situated, fifty years earlier; but the first white men in Illinois were not settlers. They were French, and the majority were Jesuit missionaries possessed by a grotesque and pathetic, yet admirable and glorious, fanaticism. They endured and suffered, never for themselves, always for the Holy Roman Catholic Church, sometimes for their King. Others were explorers, adventurers, traders; sometimes imbued with high patriotic spirit, daring much for King and Country, and often even more ambitious for worldly gain.

The settler is the person who comes into the wilderness to *settle* there, to abide (and abide is one of the score of most lovable words in the English language); to make a home. Southern Illinois was settled years before the rest of the State. It is an old part of the United States. It can never be known with certainty just who were the first settlers in Illinois: Jesuits or Trappists. Apparently about 1682, perhaps not until 1685, the Jesuits had settled at Kaskaskia — the village of the Notre Dame Cascasquias, or the Immaculate Conception of the Holy Virgin; a spot visited by Father Marquette in 1673, in what is now Randolph County.

There are those who maintain, and they are not without evidence, that the Trappists were the first settlers in what is now the State of Illinois. It is certain that in 1690 the Trappists came to where now stands the city of Belleville, on the high bluffs of the Mississippi, and below that point they settled, and built a monastery on the top of prehistoric "Monk's Mound" — a great mass of earth, made by the hand of man before Christopher Columbus sailed on his first voyage of discovery; made by men of whom nothing is known except that they built these great mounds of earth and were much more nearly civilized than those that followed them. Monk's Mound is 75 feet high, 500 feet wide, and 790 feet long.

These Trappists were settlers. They soon had vineyards, for they liked the grape and the wine from it, and did not think it a sin to enjoy in temperance the good things God had given; they had wheat and corn fields, and gardens, and their brew of ale was justly famous. This was before Vermont was settled or before the first settlers crossed the mountains into Ohio and Kentucky. It was a quarter of a century before the first tree was felled on the site of New Orleans.

Whether Trappist or Jesuit settled first, it is certain that Kaskaskia became the center of settlement of Illinois; from it radiated the lines that marked the spread of civilization in the Mississippi Valley; it was in truth "where the West began." It was the second, if not the first, and it soon became the foremost, settlement between the Alleghenies and the Rockies, from Green Bay to the Gulf. It was a town before Pittsburgh was a settlement and it was a hundred years old when the first settlers came to Chicago. Chicago was incorporated as a village in 1833. It then had fifty inhabitants. A map of Illinois of that period shows a thick sprinkling of settlements in the southern third of the state and scarcely one of the dots that mark the settlements in the central or northern third of the state.

As early as 1810 there were, separated by many miles generally, a few settlers in west central Illinois; but the first settler in Adams County came in 1820. He became Governor John Wood, and I remember his abundant sixteen-inch beard. He was a great man, but the most striking thing about him was that snowy sheaf. It is rare that a great man looks the part or lacks some quietly amusing evidence of vanity. When John Wood settled in Adams County his nearest neighbor was more than twenty miles away. The first schoolhouse within the present boundaries of that county, of course a log structure, was erected in 1825. The next year a sermon was preached in it. But the first sermons were preached in settlers' log cabins. Father Shannon told me that he heard the second sermon preached in the county and he could testify that the services were rightly called religious, for the hat was passed and the collection amounted to thirty cents. He knew, for the preacher, after inquiry, appointed him to pass the hat; doubtless because the inquiry revealed that he was the only one to be safely intrusted with real money. At the assembling of the first court in Adams County, which then included what is now Hancock County — and Illinois counties are large — to form the grand and the petit juries required every man in this wide territory except two; and of these two one, and perhaps both, were under arrest — the evidence as to the one is not quite conclusive; records were carelessly kept. The one certainly under arrest became a respected citizen. I am sure of that and am glad to bear this testimony, for, when I was a law student and paying $3.50 a week for room and board, he did not ask me my price for writing a deed for him, but handed me three dollars, when I would have been satisfied with two dollars.

The first lawyer to reside in Adams County made his residence in Quincy, the county-seat. It was an assemblage of a few families when he came to it in 1827. The first settler came to the township in which I was born in 1829; to the township in which was my home from my fifth to my nineteenth year, in 1832. The Big Snow (not the Big Wind) was in the winter of 1830–1831. The snow was four and a half feet deep on the level. Settlers were yet miles apart and babies were born and some of them and others died while yet each family was absolutely isolated.

As already indicated, the preacher preceded the schoolmaster; but schoolhouses were built before churches. By 1835 four log schoolhouses had been erected in Adams County. It was several years later before the first church was built. The settler was emphatically religious or irreligious; he left no doubt of his position; as Uncle Sammy Witt told me, he was "either a Maud S. trotter to hellfire or hell-bent for heaven regardless of consequences — he was on his way to one place or the other if the britchin' held." For years the religious services were held in the cabins of those settlers who were "professing Christians." The settler preachers were of heroic stuff. Once I heard Uncle Sammy Willard, an original settler, tell of the preacher who came to his boyhood home; and the family pitied him, because his bare feet were bleeding. In his hands he carried his wrecked boots. But he was not concerned about his feet: he had eaten nothing for forty-eight hours except some haws and berries, and he asked for food. He supped and rested two hours; and then went on, to walk all night, that the next day he might preach the funeral sermon of a godly settler, making that sermon full of the fire of hell to warn sinners for whose souls the good preacher had ceaseless concern. My sister Ella has one of the old-fashioned autograph albums. When I visit her I get the most enjoyment, of all the things in her home, out of that great album and her unlimited supply of preserves and jellies. On one page of that album is written:

> February 1, 1884. Col. III, 16. N. S. Bastion, Preacher of the Gospel for 53 years; aged 76.

The writing is clear, firm, beautiful; but what hardship can be read in it by one that knows of the settler life! He was preaching in western Illinois in 1831; and it was after that year that good Father Clark, also settler preacher, in a much longer settled territory, walked all day and all night without rest or food that he might not disappoint a congregation. This is set forth authoritatively by the Illinois State Historical Society. It was about that time that Father Peck, another settler preacher, wrote:

> Any man in the vigor of life who could not go without food for twenty-four hours, and more especially a preacher of the Gospel, ought to be sent back where he came from, to the kind care of his friends.

I lack reverence, I fear; perhaps I am too much given to questioning alleged facts, and especially beliefs, and loud declarations of righteousness; but I give humbly my fullest measure of respect and honor to the Settler Preacher.

The services of lawyers were not so often used in the early years of settlement as they were later, when business and social relations became complex. Divorces were unknown — why spend money for that which was not useful or necessary? Two early and prominent citizens of Adams County, blessed with broods of settler size as indicated by the names in the directory of the county today, and named Henry Jacobs and John S. Wood, purchased jointly a quarter section of land. Wishing to divide the land, one half becoming the property of each, they did not go to the trouble of making a quitclaim deed from each to the other, but cut the patent to the one hundred and sixty acres along a line carefully drawn down the exact middle, and each took a half. But by 1838 a court was well established in the county, at Quincy. Courts were far apart and for twenty years lawyers "rode the circuit" from "Egypt" (southern Illinois) to Galena and from Quincy to Springfield and beyond. They frequently got stuck in the mud. When there were taverns, the judge, who as well as the lawyers, had a circuit, was given the spare room, if there was one. Always there was a large room with seven or eight beds and perhaps half a dozen pallets, known as "the omnibus," and the lawyers bunked in this. Among these lawyers were Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas. When, in 1832, William Cullen Bryant visited his three brothers, all farmer settlers of western Illinois, he complained of the snoring in these omnibuses, although occasionally he had a bed all to himself.

Taking an area about forty miles in diameter, in the center of which was my home from my fifth to my nineteenth year, the first mill to grind corn in this territory was built in 1838. It was operated by horse power. Settlers came to it from as far as fifty miles. One man and his son drove sixty miles to this mill, bringing two enormous loads of grain, each drawn by six oxen. A carding machine, very crude, was erected in 1844. A grist mill was erected in the territory above marked out, in 1845. The motive power was secured by oxen on an inclined wheel. The first store was opened in 1850. Needless to say, its stock of goods included only the necessaries of life (whiskey was one of the necessaries, in the opinion of the settlers) ; and except whiskey that stock was limited. Fashions did not change even once a year, or once in five years. The first mills to reduce corn to something that could be made into johnny-cake, were pestle-and-mortar mills, operated by ox or horse power, and of the simplest possible plan and construction. They were generally called corn-pounding mills. Every family had its corn-grater. A great deal of corn was used without grinding or pounding. It was soaked in strong lye until the hull came off. It was then thoroughly washed in several waters to remove all the lye. This was the popular "lye hominy." I know more than one old fellow who will drive in any decent weather across two counties, if need be, for a meal of "hog and lye hominy." The settler also made "fine hominy." I think every household had its hominy mortar or mill of some capacity. But I never knew an original settler who did not stoutly maintain that the best way by far in which to prepare corn for food was to make it into lye hominy. A dozen times I heard Granny R. say that the reason so many settler babies died was because they could not eat lye hominy. Five of her babies died; but today her grandson is one of the prominent men of the Midland.

I adopted many settler notions; not all of them to my advantage, I fear. I listened intently to the original settlers when they gathered into a little knot at some public sale of a wandering farmer's personal property; or before or after church services; or when the grain was harvested or threshed; or at a funeral. They were like other men, yet they were different from other men else they would not have come into the wilderness, with its hardships and isolation; and out of the solitude of the settler life had come oddities and the accentuation of existing oddities.

SETTLER SUNSETS

An original settler, whom we will call "Old Winters," was "quite a character." He was not greatly different from many of the other early settlers. He came to Adams County in 1829. During the first two years of his settler life his nearest neighbor was sixteen miles away "as the crow flies" — only a crow does not fly as it is supposed to fly. During the next two years his nearest neighbor was nine miles away. He was thought to be very ignorant. Certainly he was unschooled from the printed page by the burning birch. He could not read or write. He had not grown rich. He did not work as hard as some. He shambled. The heels of his boots wore off at the forward edge and in time inclined backward. His clothing was the ultimate of the unfit and unfitting. I am sure that in all his life he had never shaved. His wife, a very suitable life-long companion, cut his hair. She cut it not oftener than twice a year. She cut it square off all the way around — the operation probably occupied not more than three minutes. I never saw this settler comb his hair except with his fingers — he so combed it when the company prepared for the table at threshing time and on other occasions. Always he went barefoot from April to October and some people thought that he did not wash his feet from May 1 to April 30, except as he waded across a creek or pool. He and I became really close friends. A boy overlooks a good many things. This old settler was of much native ability. Given right conditions, he might have been a successful lawyer. After we became such good friends, he told me, in a low, confidential tone, but freely, much about settler life that no one had told me before, but which, knowing it, I was able to verify; and gain yet more. A good deal of this was of such nature that it is not often discussed; at least, not among people of so-called refinement.

Once I asked Old Winters when he had been very communicative and confidential, about the compensations settlers found for their hardships and loneliness. He did not look at me, but far, far away, and said, "We had such beautiful sunsets."

I was glad that he was not looking at me, for I smiled, almost laughed, before I caught myself. Old Winters and the others admiring a sunset! It was amusing. And of all things, the most improbable!

He paused half a minute, and went on, not as if talking to me: "Liz" (Liz will do for the name of his wife) "said we had all our neighbors beat a mile. I rather agreed. Our cabin was on a knoll with a lot of big, straight elms about it — no limb until you got up well nigh or all of thirty feet. We liked to set in the doorway of our cabin and watch the sun between the trees. Could see it plain till it went down, for beyant the cabin lot it was prairie west of us for miles. When the sky was a little cloudy — mixed-up clouds, you know — it began to get good in summer about an hour before the sun went down. We would set and watch it. Never saw such sunsets like that back home. I liked the spring sunsets best, but Liz didn't. That's one thing we never agreed about — that and some of the birds and soap making." And for half an hour Old Winters talked on, as if to no one in particular, about various remarkable sunsets he and Liz had seen. Twice he called to her to be sure of something — she was dyeing the stuffs for a rag carpet: no more important work could come into her life — and when he called the third time, to verify a point, she came and sat down with us and told of the sunset the evening after they buried their only boy baby, and which somehow comforted her — "p'raps heaven is something glorious and beautiful like it was" — and the tears ran down her furrowed face.

I know that Old Winters and Liz were not the only settlers who loved the sunsets. I know that the sunsets one sees from the wilderness are, beyond words, superior to those one sees from among tall buildings or farm houses. Nature does her best painting for those that love her well enough to dwell with her.

How much of our youth clings to us! After Old Winters told me of the settler sunsets all sunsets had a new interest and meaning and beauty to me; and as I have written this page on the bank of Lake Weir I have a dozen times lost myself in the beauty of the sunset that in wondrous glory paints with a thousand tints the Florida sky, from west to east!

SOUTHERN NEIGHBORS

WHEN, in 1865, the Stahl family moved to its new home, its neighbors, with the exception of two families, were Southern settlers and their descendants. A majority of the earliest, the original settlers, were yet alive. Of course they were not many, for the original settlers were not many; but they had been prolific. They had enthusiastically obeyed the command of the Almighty to multiply. It would appear that as regards this they were never "weary in well-doing." Notwithstanding the great infant mortality, by 1865 there were not only large families of children, but large families of grandchildren. The children of the earliest settlers believed heartily that in some things their elders had set a good example.

Our new neighbors had scarcely been touched by outside influences. The grandchildren as well as the children were almost like the original settlers. All were clannish.

Outsiders had not been desired to marry among them. The young men did not go among others to get wives. Perhaps they remembered that the son of an original settler had done this and that Cain had not made a success of life. The settler people intermarried, and this kept among them year after year and generation after generation the same characteristics, the same beliefs and prejudices and superstitions, and the same customs, standards, and language.

These people loved fiercely and hated fiercely. They were emotional, narrow, easily prejudiced. They acted before they thought, but after they had felt. Thought was to them laborious and reasoning was sometimes impossible. That was not so much because of a lack of mind as of an excess of emotion. Something that an outsider could not see was other than trivial might condemn even one of their own to years of disfavor. It was fatal to defy custom. It was plain that some of their customs had been held sacred for at least one hundred and fifty years. Some went back to Elizabethan days. So did some of the words, phrases, and constructions of their everyday conversation. And that conversation was characterized by a copious continuity when there had been a social occasion with the usual refreshments.

SOUTHERN SETTLER WORDS

We learned some new words and constructions. In spite of all our parents could do, we children of the Stahl family adopted them. " Nary " and " ary " amused us. Of course we guessed almost at once that they meant none and any; and at once we used them, to the disgust of our parents. I never knew our parents to use ary or nary, except in sport; and in justice to their children I am glad to say that they dropped these words before long. Unfortunately we did not so soon drop the violations of grammar that we at once acquired, such things as " I done it " and " I seen them " and " we wuz." My parents used good English and rarely offended against good usage or the rules of grammar, and they had hoped that their children would continue to do likewise. If our neighbors had continued to be Easterners we doubtless would have used good English. Unfortunately practically all of our Southern neighbors not only used strange words and outlandish phrases, but they revealed a surprising ingenuity and diligence in breaking all the rules of grammar ever formulated. This and the use of tobacco and the increase of population were the only things about which some were ever diligent. Unfortunately the language of our neighbors had such effect on the Stahl children that to this day I am never sure of my English, although many friends have been kind enough to tell me it is not wholly and outrageously bad.

Also, let it be recorded, some of the words our new neighbors used were once of the highest reputation, and later I found them in the big dictionary with *Obs.* after them; and after *Obs.* quotations from Shakespeare, often, or some of his contemporaries or near-contemporaries. There could not have been better evidence of the isolation in which the settlers and their forbears had lived. In some spots the English language escaped contamination for three hundred years.

Our Southern neighbors were never afraid; always they were " afeard." My mother had a real aversion to that word. Her dislike of it was hearty. She feared that one of her children might use it. I think that probably she had heard some very ignorant or vulgar person use the word. She was indifferent to fear and fearful; but not to afeard. That Chaucer and Shakespeare used the word, that it was once of the highest standing, could not lessen in the least her dislike.

Our Southern neighbors, from the mountainous regions of eastern Tennessee and Kentucky, said " fur " and " furder." They spoke of a man's " beastes," and of " nestes " and " postes " and in low voices of " ghostes." These words are used today by the people of these mountain regions. They were used by Chaucer. Our neighbors used other words that had been used by their ancestors centuries before, but were not used by our Eastern neighbors of Mendon Prairie.

The pronunciation of some of our Southern neighbors was new to us, and until we became accustomed to it, it was sometimes puzzling. A few days after we were settled in our new home a near neighbor made a friendly call and in the course of the conversation he mentioned that another neighbor wished the loan of a "hoss," but he was not sure that he could "spar" one. Not until after he had gone did it come to my father that "spar" was his pronunciation of spare. To nearly all words that had the long sound of "a" the Southern neighbors extended the pronunciation given spare, and that made bear into "bar." Those who have read the old-time stories of the pioneers, explorers, adventurers, famous hunters, the Daniel Boones and Davy Crocketts, know that these men never tracked and killed a bear; always it was a "bar."

Some quite respectable words, of a good family, were of unusual interest to us because of the frequency and diversity of their use by Southern neighbors. One such word was "peart." My mother inquired of a neighbor boy about the health of his mother, father, and aunt. He replied that his father was "porely" (he always was, being no friend of labor); that his mother, who had been sick, was yet "powerful weak"; and that his brother had been "miscouraged," but was at that time "right smart peart." "Powerful weak" was a phrase of much use: the coffee or the lye or the sermon or the prayer or the dog might be powerful weak. It was quite frequently said of a person when he was not well that he was "miscouraged." The word was applied to both a physical and a mental condition. When a person was "right smart peart" or "right peart," he was feeling fine; he was in good health. A child or a pup that was very quick was peart. Several times I heard an original settler say of some fast-growing, rank corn that it was peart. When a boy in an adjoining county married at sixteen years of age (girls frequently married at that age) Granny Roberts said, " Wul, he allers wuz peart." A girl danced peart; a colt held its head peart; a man combed his hair peart. But the word had its most common significance and its most emphatic meaning when applied to the physical condition that produced unusual animal spirits, bubbling energy, high good-humor.

When a cub in a law office I was on one occasion slightly more than an innocent spectator of a lawsuit. On one side was a lawyer who had emigrated from Connecticut; on the other side was a lawyer who was a native of Missouri. In questioning witnesses the Missouri lawyer several times used " right smart." Finally the Connecticut man arose and requested the court to require that his learned brother from Missouri tell just how much he meant by " right smart." The judge, an old Irishman, solemnly entered the order. The Missourian responded, " Right smart, your honor, is just twice as much as one of those damned Connecticut considerables." He was not punished for contempt of court.

EASTERNER VERSUS SOUTHERNER

THE founders of Mendon, Illinois, were from Mendon, Massachusetts. The settlers on Mendon Prairie — the wide tongue of prairie on the edge of which I was born — were nearly all from Massachusetts or Connecticut. The Pennsylvania Dutch preferred the adjoining timbered, hilly land. Because the Stahls were from the East, because those of our Mendon Prairie neighbors whom we knew well were like us in ideas, ways, and customs, they were congenial and we did not lose contact with them. All in all, they probably had on my character and life a greater influence than our Southern neighbors. In the Mendon neighborhood lived two brothers of my father, with their families, all well above the average in intellect and intelligence; thoughtful, reading people. Our nearest neighbors were the Starr family, of pure New England stock, than whom there were in the United States few people more thoughtful or cultured; forceful thinkers, and readers of the best literature. For years this Starr family were my mother's best friends.

Strange as we found our Southern neighbors in thought and word and customs and manners, we soon became accustomed to them — except the little mother. She liked them in time, she respected them, she had a sincere affection for a few, but she could never be in any degree as one of them. They realized that. One thing that helped them to recognize this was that my mother, accustomed to afternoon calls, never returned the all-day visits of the kind-hearted neighbors from the South — visits that began in the early morning and were often of ten hours duration; and soon it was said among our neighbors that " Mrs. Stahl is proud; she won't neighbor; she won't be sociable."

From what I have written it is plain that the Easterners and the Southerners were quite different. Admiring, as I do, the Southerners, it must nevertheless be said in all honesty that in intelligence and education those from the East were, on the average, far superior to those from the South; in brains there was not much difference. Those from the East had much the more money when they reached western Illinois or wherever they chose to settle, and they were the better money-makers. Ninety per cent of the settlers from the East were from New England, New York State, and Pennsylvania. Those from New England had the most education, intelligence, ability, and money. Those from New York State probably came second. Of those from Pennsylvania, the majority were intelligent and moderately well educated; and some were uneducated and slow mentally, but they had and made money. A very few of the settlers from the South had education, intelligence, and money. They came from the landed class. Possibly they had owned slaves. They furnished such lawyers, doctors, and politicians as came from the Southern settlers.

The New Englanders brought money with them when they came; they made money; and, what vexed the poor Southerners, they inherited money. It appeared that every one of them had a rich or, at the least, well-to-do maiden aunt or sister or bachelor uncle or brother who died just when some money could be invested profitably in western Illinois; and in their wills these maids and bachelors had remembered their emigrant relatives in Illinois. It did seem that New England relatives always died at just the most opportune time. Nearly all the New Englanders were not only well educated: they were great readers, not only of newspapers, but of magazines and good books. They were industrious; and being also intelligent and progressive, they were successful farmers. They improved their farms rapidly and were the first to have comfortable dwellings. They delayed as little as possible the building of "meeting houses" and schools. They were in every way excellent citizens. Some of their neighbors, especially those from the South, considered them "close." They wanted the last cent due them and always were careful that the other party got the last cent due him. The Pennsylvanians also believed in churches and schools; worked hard, were saving, and made good farmers; they were honest, also conservative; not so much given to reading; some were phlegmatic, almost lethargic; nearly all brought some money with them, put it into land, made more money, put it into more land; and all loved their families intensely and also their "land of the free."

The large majority of the Southerners had been "poor white trash" or small property owners — the farmer class with farms of forty or fewer acres of poor land; or mechanics, most of whom had "just picked up their trades"; or clerks who had just managed to eke out a living — all these had little education; and no more money. They had no rich relatives to die and help them. They came of people who had rarely done more than obtain a scanty living; who were sometimes in debt; who "got behind" some years and were never able to do more than catch up again; who were occasionally the objects of charity of relatives or friends or the public; and who furnished a respectable percentage of the population of the poorhouse.

Few, if any, of the Southerners were as industrious, energetic, or frugal as the Yankees. They amused themselves more. I never heard of a Yankee settler's going to a horse race. He rarely played cards. The Yankee may not have considered horse racing or card playing wicked, but he knew that it was a waste of time. The Southerner more than liked horse racing and a good horse; for them he had a strong affection; and cards had an irresistible attraction to his fingers. The Southerner gambled. He bet on horse races, on card games, on shooting matches, on wrestling bouts. The Yankee rarely bet. Generally the immorality of betting did not concern him; but the man who bet might lose his money. To the Southerner the joy of winning was greater than the sorrow at losing; to the Yankee the pain of losing was greater than the satisfaction of winning. The few Southern settlers of the better class were not indolent, but they worked moderately. They did many things moderately. They went at making money rather indifferently; yet they found more pleasure in making it than in keeping it. The Yankee had money to lend; the Southerner had need of money to borrow. The better class of Southern settlers were safe debtors. They might not pay a debt the very day it was due, and they were not the ones perturbed by the delay; but they would certainly pay a part, at least, before long, and pay all in the end. They constituted more than one half of the bar; they held nearly all the public offices; they had the best horses; and they grew tobacco and always kept themselves well supplied with whiskey. Apparently they got more out of life than the Yankee; but this was in appearance only. The Southerner had the amusement of play; the Yankee the enjoyment of owning.

THE POOR WHITE SOUTHERN SETTLER

QUITE different from these better Southern settlers were those of the "poor white" class, landless or nearly so in their old homes, far removed from the slave-holding class. They were not energetic. In their youth they had not been well nourished and they came of ill-nourished stock. They were illiterate. More than half of the women and some of the men could not write. They "made their mark." Some could not read. But that mattered little, for with a few exceptions they did not care to read books or magazines or newspapers. They were more nearly content than those that had or knew more. These uneducated Southerners should have not blame but pity. It was not their fault that they were such as they were. They were poor and ignorant because of Slavery. They knew this and most of them were anti-slavery. They should be given high praise that they had the ambition and courage to strike out, almost without money; to travel hundreds of miles when it meant that all but the babes and very old must walk, through forests that had no roads, getting across rivers that had no bridges, going into a wilderness that spelled hardship, drudgery, disease, and danger; but also promised a home, and for their children and grandchildren fairer conditions. If these settlers lacked some things they should have had and had some things they should have lacked, it was because they were the product of generations of enforced ignorance, insanitary surroundings, unhygienic living, scant food of a few articles inferior in content — often for months only corn bread and buttermilk with a little pork: much to encourage disease in a body weakened by bad breeding, bad feeding, and bad housing.

I doubt if there were ever any people more pathetically eager that their young should have the educational advantages denied to them than these poor Southern settlers. They were more desirous than the settlers from the East that their children have opportunity to get an education. When their boys had reached their teens, the Southerners, almost without exception, sent their boys to school when the winter term began, while the large majority of the Easterners' boys worked in the fields until the corn was all husked, which was rarely before the middle of December. The boys of the Southerners stayed in school until the winter term closed and possibly went to the summer term, while the boys of the Easterners were taken out of school March first, because " farm work began " on that date. That was the date on which the hired hands began their employment.

It can be said for the Southerners that they were the more neighborly and " obliging." Among the major sins in the eyes of the Southerner was unneighborliness. No one had ever heard of a trained nurse. A hospital had been heard of, and was put on the same level as the insane asylum, the jail, and the poorhouse. When one was sick the neighbors were supposed to do the greater part of the nursing. An Easterner might fail in what was considered his share of the nursing, but a Southerner never! He would do more: he would cut a big pile of stove-wood, and feed and water the horses and other animals, and husk the corn or put the hay in the stack or the wheat or oats in shock for a sick neighbor. If it were the wife and mother who was sick the Southern women would bring bread and other eatables; would do the washing and ironing; when necessary would do all the work that the sick woman had done, cheerfully, heartily. Always a Southerner was quicker than an Easterner to offer sympathy and help in time of misfortune. Generally the Southerner had less than the Easterner, but he would give more. The Southerner was, compared with the Easterner, ignorant and prejudiced, he was " sensitive " and the more easily offended, he was more bitter and unscrupulous toward one he disliked, his house and his fields were not so clean, his food was not so wholesome, he drank twenty times as much whiskey and chewed much more tobacco, he did not have as good farm animals except horses, he had more dogs and they slept in the house, he was religious rather than moral; but he had counterbalancing qualities and virtues that shone brightest when their light was most needed. If he were a friend he was a warm, fighting friend no matter how poor or unfortunate or ignorant the object of his friendship might be. The Easterner was the more admirable; the Southerner was the more lovable. The Easterner was the more desirable neighbor while fortune smiled; the Southerner was the better friend when fortune frowned.

CHAPTER IV

YOUTHFUL PLAY

READING

AS THE log cabin as a habitation passed out of my life there went with it most of the play of my earliest years. But one sport moved to the new home with the Stahl family and grew in importance: we continued to read and we read more. It was this play which brought us the most solid and dependable enjoyment.

I cannot remember when I could not read, but doubtless I remember many things that occurred before I could read. The little mother was well educated for a woman of her time, even in Philadelphia. She found, in some miraculous way, time to be interested in the desire of her children to read when they were very young. She was the best teacher her children ever had — the most efficient, patient, and inspiring. The father rarely read anything besides the papers, unless it was a book of biography or history; but he read the papers well. The little mother was always a great reader and she read nearly everything that she could obtain. None of her children could ever remember a time until she was past seventy years of age that she slept more than six hours of the twenty-four. After all the rest of the family had gone to sleep she would read until midnight, and be up at four or five the next morning. After she was eighty she read books on comparative religion, although she was a devout Christian — who cared little for forms and "church," but believed that heaven is found within — and hereafter — by following in the footsteps

PRAIRIE FARMER.

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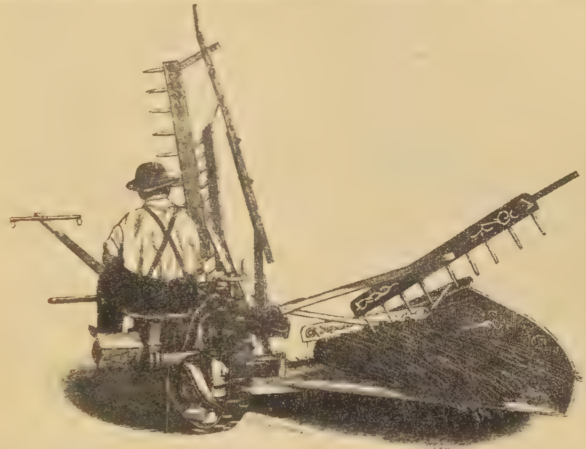


JOHNSTON'S SELF-RAKING REAPER.

We present herewith an accurate illustration of this new and popular machine, which, during a short career of only four years in the field, has leaped into the very front rank of reapers. It was first brought prominently before the public at the celebrated Auburn trial of two years ago, where the Johnston Self-Rake carried off the first prize. At the Minnesota state field trial, held at Rochester, two years ago, the machine was awarded the highest premium as a Self-Raking Reaper; also the Sweepstakes prize as a Self-Raking Reaper at the state field trial held at the latter place in August last, and we can bear personal testimony to the excellence of the work it then performed, winning many friends, and, if we remember correctly, making the best time of any machine on exhibition. The Johnston machine is designed to be used solely as a reaper; and prominent among the points of excellence claimed for it by the proprietors, are, simplicity, good workmanship and durability, lightness of draft, a six-foot cut and Johnston's Automatic Rake, which is so arranged that the driver can regulate at will the size of the gavels.

Comparatively few of these machines have as yet been introduced at the West, but we learn from the manufacturers that it is the design to put a large number into the Western market the present season, and that, owing to the unexpectedly large demand for machines, they have been compelled to purchase a new factory at Brockport, N. Y. For further particulars, see advertisement in another column.

Editorial Correspondence.

NORTHWESTERN SHEEP-BREEDERS' ASSOCIATION

Fourth Annual Fair.

This Association met, as announced, at Belvidere, May 5th, on the grounds of the Boone County Agricultural Society. The weather proved very unfavorable, the first two days and morning of the third being rainy and cold. The attendance of breeders with sheep was consequently much smaller than was anticipated. The traveling was so bad that many who designed coming could not get there with their sheep; the number on exhibition, however, reached over one hundred head, and represented some of the best flocks in the neighborhood. We enumerate a few of the exhibitors, not having a full list:

C. H. & F. A. Smith, of Genoa, were on hand as usual with representatives from their flock, headed by their Vermont buck, "Tiptoe," for which they paid $4500; his fleece gave 26 lbs. 1 oz., and the three fleeces he has sheared have averaged 26 lbs 4 oz. The animal has a very heavy, oily fleece.

A. Goodsil, of Marengo, had a good lot of breeding ewes which he is breeding to the buck "Tiptoe," and carried off the Society's premium for the best pen of three lambs.

E. J. Higgins, recently removed from Vermont to this State, showed a buck and two ewes, carrying off the first prize on the buck in "American Merino" class.

E. W. Thompson, of Grouse, drove thirty miles over the bad roads, bringing three sheep, one a buck five years old, from Hammond's old "Black," and two good ewes.

A. Crill, of Rockford, showed a two year old buck, "Young Prince," bred by Mr. Bels, of Vermont, showing a remarkable constitution, with a very even fleece of wool.

James Hoag, of St. Charles, showed a pen of six fine ewes, bred by John Barker, of New York, sired by Barker's buck, "Prophet," whose three fleeces have weighed 21, 27 and 30 lbs. The ewes showed a fine staple for delaine manufacture.

J. H. Fitch and D. W. Gates, of Belvidere, each made a fine exhibition. They have both made large investments in Vermont stock, and have fine flocks. They are breeding principally to the buck "Prince of Golden Fleece" sired by Stowel's "Golden Fleece," and bred by Mr. Upson, of Vermont.

B. G. Eaton, also of Belvidere, made a fine show from his flock, taking the first premium on yearling ewes in the "American Merino" class.

J. W. Knapp, of Ogle county, made a very fine

of Jesus. She was interested in all the world and in all the ages.

Inevitably her children, even when very young, found their chief recreation in reading.

Inasmuch as mail was brought to the star route post office two miles distant only once a week, we did not take a daily paper. I never heard of any farm people taking a daily paper in those days. As we had done when in the log cabin home, we subscribed for several good weekly papers. In the 1860's and 1870's patches were fashionable, and father would quote, laughing,

> Patch by patch is neighborly,
> But patch upon patch is beggarly,

looking ruefully at his shirt or trousers; but it was impossible to think of not getting the New York *Weekly Tribune* with Greeley's editorials (the paper was never the same after 1872); and we got also the Chicago *Weekly Tribune,* the local papers, the *Prairie Farmer,* the *Independent,* and the *Religious Telescope.* From our neighbors we got other papers by exchange — to exchange papers was the custom in those days.

There was a good deal more than just news in these periodicals and the Stahl children clipped the prose or poem that they especially liked. Scrap books were unknown. The clippings were carefully rolled up and these cylinders were frequently unrolled and read, often aloud. This was fine recreation for a rainy day. Then it was recreation to roll up the clippings again, some of them quite long, so carefully and accurately that the edges were even throughout. It was so important to take the best care of these precious gems, so often called on to make enjoyable what would otherwise have been a tedious hour. In this way some of the best poems ever written in the United States were memorized by the Stahl children. Longfellow, Bryant, Whittier, and Lowell wrote for the periodicals then.

We had always at least one good magazine — in time *Scribner's;* and *Arthur's Magazine* and *Godey's Lady's Book.* I think we got *Godey's* by exchange. Best of all, we subscribed for *The Little Corporal* as long as it was published. It was edited by Mrs. Emily Huntington Miller, whom I had the pleasure of knowing thirty years later. I think it was the best magazine for youths of all ages that was ever published. Its first issue was of July, 1865. It was so crippled by the Chicago fire that the panic conditions that began in 1873 were too hard for it, and it was absorbed by the *Youth's Companion* in 1875. Among its contributors were Edward Eggleston, Frances E. Willard, Thos. K. Beecher, Sarah E. Henshaw, Julia T. Snow, John H. Vincent, Grace Greenwood, Lucia Chase Bell, Ralph Leonard, and Julia Thayer — all among the very popular writers of their day. But of all the contributors to the columns of *The Little Corporal,* no other had so warm a place in the hearts of its readers as Emily Huntington Miller. I know it will warm amazingly every reader of *The Little Corporal* who may ever see this when he is reminded of her "The Royal Road to Fortune." Before that appeared "The Bear's Den" — a story of real children. In 1869 was published "A Year at Riverside Farm." The months were so long that year of 1869! It did seem that the date for the mail to bring the next number of *The Little Corporal* would never come.

Of course we got some of the premiums, among them a steel-line engraving of "The Heavenly Cherubs" — sister Sarah has that yet. During the many years that I traveled around among farmers and other rural people I often encountered that steel-line engraving and nearly always I was told it was obtained as a premium with *The Little Corporal* — had I ever heard of the magazine for children? I had. And farming was not the subject of conversation for some time.

The Stahl family had an amazing variety of reading matter. We read even the Robert Bonner periodicals and a *Saturday Night* periodical that was filled with blood-and-thunder tales of wild Indians and wilder whites. These amused us almost as much as Petroleum V. Nasby, in the Toledo *Blade* — which we got — amused my father. In these stories one white girl, with long, waving hair and a real wasplike waist and flashing eyes — the tales were illustrated with the wood cuts of the time — always succeeded in killing thirteen Indians and releasing her lover. I remember how my mother would laugh over these tales. I am sure we got this publication on exchange. Our parents believed in growth, development. They had little belief in the wisdom of attempted repression. Considering financial conditions, our mother was very liberal in her allowances of loaf sugar. Of course we were not satisfied. She gave us all we wished to eat. After that none of us cared so much for loaf sugar. I think our parents had something like that in mind when they permitted us to read so widely. They believed that we had sense and taste enough of a good sort to surfeit of the poor reading after a time; and that it was the forbidden fruit that led to the fall. I once heard my father say that if a boy was going to the devil he would go in spite of all attempted restraint or advice or shielding and the sooner he went the better. My observation has shown me that he was right.

BOOKS

Of our books, brought to and then from the log cabin home and carefully cherished, there was, of course, the Bible. Next prized was " The Prose Writers of America," edited by Rufus Wilmot Griswold. This was of the second and " revised edition." It was a really valuable work, which gave a biographical sketch and samples of the work of every author of any great merit of the United States from Jonathan Edwards, born 1703, to E. P. Whipple, born 1819 — seventy-two in all. It contained some fine steel engravings by S. Sartain, from paintings. Forty pages were given to a discriminating treatise on "The Intellectual History, Condition and Prospects of the Country." The volume, much the worse for wear, but intact, is one of my priceless treasures today. It has had a greater influence on my life than any other book except one other and the Bible. I believe that one should winnow the Bible. If one do that, he will find in it, more than in any other book, the map and directions of the highest, fullest, happiest life. And in the King James Version he will find the most useful and beautiful English that has ever been put in one volume. Other books were several volumes by Channing; a volume of Byron's Poetry; Tupper's "Proverbial Philosophy"; a biography of Lafayette, which was also a most excellent and comprehensive history of the French Revolution; a biography of Cleopatra, by Jacob Abbott; Thiers' "History of the French Revolution" and nearly all of his "The Consulate and the Empire"; and a calf bound set of text books on Astronomy, Chemistry, Natural Philosophy, and Moral Philosophy. There was always access to a Sunday-school library, which contained instructive but not uninteresting books especially designed for the young. These books could be brought to the home for a limited period. An occasional book was borrowed from a Mendon Prairie neighbor or my uncle, the minister. He had a respectable library. There was as much to read as there was time for, most of the reading matter was very good, and none, except Martin Tupper, was as bad as it might have been.

When I was nine years of age we had for all of a year the loan of a gorgeous "Complete Works of William Shakespeare." It was the property of a neighbor, who read in only two books: the Bible and the hymn book of the United Brethren. Some book agent had beguiled him into purchasing the gaudily bound volume on the installment plan. John was glad to lend the volume. Maria was even more pleased to show her neighborliness in this way, for it was a task to dust the cumbersome volume. Besides, she had never been able to determine if it would be a sin to put this volume on the mahogany center-table (actually brought from Pennsylvania) along with the Family Bible and the photograph album filled chiefly with daguerreotypes. I read the greater part of Shakespeare's Works. My mother expostulated, almost scolded, and laughed. But she allowed me to continue this reading. I think one reason for her doing so was the amusement I afforded my brother and older sisters. I got a surprising amount out of the big book. Of course of the real beauty and the significance of Shakespeare I got only a little. I enjoyed the tragedies more than the comedies. "Julius Caesar," "Macbeth," "The Merchant of Venice," and "King Lear" were my favorites. The first time I read it some parts of "The Merchant of Venice" moved me deeply. I am inclined to think that of all of Shakespeare's plays "The Merchant of Venice" is best understood by the immature mind. From that first reading I have never lost the beauty of

> The moon shines bright: in such a night as this
> When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees
> And they did make no noise, in such a night —

I was uncertain about Troilus, altogether at sea about Cressid, had never heard of Thisbe, and that was substantially true of Dido, Medea, and Aeson, but that did not take from me the beauty and witchery of the dialogue of Jessica and Lorenzo —

> How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank.
>
> Such harmony is in immortal souls.
>
> I am never merry, when I hear sweet music.
>
> How far that little candle throws his beams!
> So shines a good deed in a naughty world.
>
> The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark,
> When neither is attended.

When, later, I read and reread several times the life of Lafayette which was such a good history of the French

Revolution, and the several volumes of Thiers' "History of the Consulate and the Empire" which my mother had when she was married, I obtained an understanding of the French people that served me well in after years. The French are unlike any other people. Rather, no other people are like the French.

We had a large book on "The War of the Rebellion" with full page pictures of cannon shooting enormous visible shells and of bayonet charges and always as many generals as privates and the generals on wonderful horses and swinging their hats and so on.

That greatest and most profitable joke of all literature, Tupper's "Proverbial Philosophy," my father had given to my mother before they were married, for during all of thirty years every lover was expected to give a copy of it to his sweetheart. The copy I have now in my library is, it is asserted on a fly leaf, of "the fiftieth English edition." In the foreword of this edition is quoted from Tupper's biography as it had appeared in "Representative Men": "Within thirty years his 'Proverbial Philosophy' has passed through forty large editions in England, while nearly a million of copies have been sold in America. It was translated into French, German, Swedish, and many other languages. The first edition appeared in 1837. In all, three million copies of this book were sold." That was the equivalent of fifteen million copies now. And Tupper was the author of twenty-eight other volumes. The title of one was "The Crock of Gold."

We read several of the books of ~~John~~ G. Holland. I have now the copy of Bayard Taylor's "Hannah Thurston" which we read — yes, I read it — in 1875. We read several of the books of E. P. Roe, probably the first American author whose books regularly reached a circulation of 100,000. I remember reading "What Can She Do?" when it came out in 1873. My two sisters, older than I, had the book, and others by the same author. I mention Holland and Taylor and Roe to indicate the variety of the books we read. We read many books. In those days it was quite the thing to borrow and lend books. A book might be read by a hundred people. It was so with magazines. I think that in the new home, at least, were read more or less regularly every magazine of merit except the *Atlantic.*

OTHER AMUSEMENTS

IN THE new home as in the old we had such games as "Fox and Geese," checkers, and even "Pussy Wants a Corner." Because of the strong public opinion in the neighborhood against the use of "a euchre deck" of cards, we did not have the games played with these cards. But we had the card game of "Authors," and it is to be regretted that this game was destroyed by newspaper witticisms. I think that of all our games we most enjoyed one new to us — dominoes. Our first set was whittled out of pine by my brother, the spots being made with lead pencil. The following Christmas we had a "boughten set." Quite often the little mother would take a hand in our games, especially when the game was a foursome in dominoes. The light from the tallow candle or lard lamp or explosive coal oil lamp — one followed the other — was always brighter if Mother played with us. How merrily she would laugh at the result of an "Old Maid" game of dominoes. She was always the umpire. I do not think that we ever disputed her decisions. I never knew my father to play a game of any kind.

But the greatest game of all, the greatest treat of all, was to look at "the old Dutch Bible" which was German, of very large pages, and a foot thick. It was printed in 1702 and contains many, many half-page pictures. It was impossible to look at this Bible hour after hour and many days without wearing and sometimes tearing the pages; and as the book was an heirloom and was understood to be valuable, it was put away, when it had become worn and some pages sadly damaged, and was brought forth to be admired and wondered about, on only infrequent occasions, when there was some especial reason why the children should be well entertained; and well entertained they were, although they missed much because there was none could read a word of German. This Bible is one of my treasures today. It contains 1732 pages. It has much display type of the clearly hand-made sort. One of the names on the title page is Martin Luther. That name is printed in letters that make it stand out above the other names. I have been told that the engravings, some of them a full page, are works of art. I am sure that they are. Once, some years ago, a man offered me such a large price for the book that I fear he was " spoofing " me. The pictures in this old Bible gave the Stahl children supreme enjoyment. The favorite pictures were those in which Satan has a conspicuous position.

Not this Bible, but the King James translation, that incomparable English, was read much. All her life known to her children the little mother read the Bible very much. She had a remarkable memory and no concordance was needed when she could be consulted. Her children early learned to read the Bible, and they were made all the more familiar with it because the Sunday-school offered prizes for reciting correctly chapters from the Bible. The Boy was taught parts of this great book before he could read and before he reached his teens he loved its pure and beautiful English. Regardless of " religion," he has found no other book so profitable to read. He that loves good English may well read the King James translation, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Works of William Shakespeare.

Our neighbors thought that I was allowed to read too much and said so; but my mother thought otherwise. The neighbors said I had " too many brains for my body." I once heard my mother say in reply that she hoped I would have strength of mind to compensate for a puny body.

" Small beer and little things, they happen in a man's life, and very often tell more about his character than a battle where a thousand lives have been lost," wrote Plutarch. This will give some glimpse of the hard life of those paying for a farm, as all farmers were in the sixties and seventies in western Illinois: I can not remember playing a dozen times with any of the neighbor boys, except at school. Three or four times Billy Nelson came to play with me for an hour; and as many times I went to his home to play with him for the same length of time. Work was the order of the day and every day. Another significant fact is that I never went to swim — never had opportunity to learn to swim; I was thirteen when I first went fishing and fifteen before I went fishing beyond the boundaries of our farm. Yet year after year life was much easier for me than it had been for my brother when of the same age. I had to work harder than some of the neighbor boys, but I was not so over-taxed as were others. Our times of leisure were the winter evenings, with snatches on Sundays and some rainy days. But my life was not without play — it was full of play.

Of course I had dogs; but only two of them, for neither of my parents had high regard for dogs. My first dog was "just dog." His name was Rover. I had great sport tumbling around with him in the grass and clover; but my clearest recollection of him is that if I had not lost my hat or cap he was sure to bury it just where I could not find it.

My other dog was a beautiful full-blooded Esquimau. His name was Jack — a very proper name for the most interesting dog that ever lived! Cousin Charles bought him in Chicago and gave him to me. I suppose he missed his old associates, but I was comforted about that, for Charles said he bought him of a saloon-keeper. A dog is entitled to moral environment. Jack was the only dog my mother ever liked. She actually allowed him in the kitchen at rare times. He was fearless. He never retreated. His teeth were cruelly sharp. He understood human speech. He knew the names of the horses. He was all fidelity. Some criminal poisoned him. His body was buried with much ceremony and many tears, the little mother taking the leading part.

MAKING PLAY OF WORK

THE essence of work is monotony. The hardest physical or mental exercise, if novel, is easily made into play. The Stahls were experts in such transmutation. One of our most enjoyed sports was to fill the bed ticks with fresh straw. This was done three or four times a year; and always one of the times was shortly after threshing. Mother always went with us to do this and she enjoyed it as much as we did. Always she was a good playmate. We made great play of it, tumbling around in the straw and trying to cover one another up in it; and then rolling on the filled, bulging ticks to mash them down. It was yet greater play to carry the big, unwieldy ticks to the house and manage to get them on the beds. It was the greatest sport of all to run and jump on them, now so high up, and, sitting on them, bound up and down, until the little, laughing mother declared they were flat enough.

The ticks rested on a rope that passed around pegs with round heads, placed about a foot apart along both sides and ends of the bed. This rope was passed back and forth across the bed, first from side to side and then between the head and the foot. One end was fastened securely, at a corner. Then, while one of us was permitted to hold the loose end, father made the rope tight by grasping the length nearest this corner and throwing his weight on it, and thus from one length to another, throwing his weight on the next length as he gradually released the one he had just pushed down. Thus the slack was accumulated and finally taken up. We children did not say a word while father was doing this. It was a serious operation, but we got excitement out of it. Once when father threw his weight on the rope it broke and he went down very suddenly until his nose collided with a piece of rope that held tight. A great piece of skin was scraped off and it bled profusely. Father looked so comical when he went down and scrambled up that we were all hard put to it not to laugh. He was not noted for his mild temper. A little later we managed to gather in the "spare room" and I can see distinctly the little mother bending over and shaking with laughter while we all held our hands closely over our mouths. We laughed about this mishap quite often — when father was not of the company.

Greasing our boots and shoes was another serious operation; almost a solemn occasion; but we made it real play. They were greased with one part of neat's foot oil to two parts of beef tallow. Nothing else would father use. The mixture must be hot and rubbed in thoroughly, particularly where the upper and the sole met.

It was great play to go nutting. Hickory nuts were abundant on the new farm and each year we put in the spare room several bushels of them, hulled, to dry thoroughly. During the fall I ate enough green ones to keep my mouth sore; but I was happy. With a boy the stomatogastric sensations are, and properly, of first importance.

It is easy for children to make play. One could tell by his wagon from whence the neighbor or his parents or grandparents had come. Wagons were repaired and patched until they were made to last through three generations. Every blacksmith proclaimed by his sign that he was a wagon-maker. If the neighbor had a Conestoga wagon it was certain that he or his ancestor had come from Pennsylvania, New York, or some other eastern locality. The chances were three out of four that he was from Pennsylvania. The Conestoga was by odds the heaviest of all the wagons. Next in weight and staunchness was the wagon from New England. As the wagon was of less and less weight it bespoke an origin farther and farther south. The lightest wagons of all came from South Carolina. One of our diversions was to guess at night whose wagon we heard on the road. The wagons from Pennsylvania, New England, Kentucky and Virginia, North Carolina and Tennessee, and South Carolina, had each a different sound; and different wagons from the same State had different sounds, depending, in each case, on its condition of chronic disrepair. A man's character could be known by his wagon almost as accurately as by his dog.

It was yet greater, keener play to go with a load of sorghum cane to the molasses mill, for that was not only escape from the grinding work, but the enjoyment of watching the cane crushed and seeing the juice run into the tank and then into the big sheet-iron " pans " in which it was boiled down to molasses. Sometimes one was permitted to follow the ox or mule hitched to the end of a long, stout pole and which by tramping around in a circle turned the three cylinders, called " rolls," between which the cane was crushed. If it had been necessary to drive the animal and one had that job, it would have been the most tiresome work; but when one did not have to do it, tramping around behind the mule or ox was great play. Best of all was to whittle out a little paddle and scoop up some of the warm molasses in the " cooling pan " and eat until one was very uncomfortable all the way home. But what is acute stomach-ache compared with the joy of eating warm molasses out of a cooling pan?

CHAPTER V

THE DISTRICT SCHOOL

I BEGIN SCHOOL

I DID not go to school while the log cabin was my home. I went to school a short time the first winter I was in the new home — that house with the wonderful second story on top of the first.

The schoolhouse was only a quarter of a mile from my home; but the snow was deep and the cold severe much of the winter; I was not strong and caught cold easily. My mother was a wise woman and kept me at home. I had already learned to read. That I " just picked up."

I went the summer term of two months in 1866 and nearly all of the winter term of five months that began the following September. I was a year older and perhaps the snow was not so deep, or the weather so severe. Then a neighbor, a strong boy of sixteen or seventeen, sometimes carried me to and from school when the snow was deep. His name was Jake — Jake Groves. Jake liked to do such things and all his life he was helpful. His father owned several hundred acres of land, which made him the largest farmer in the neighborhood. He was a good farmer and a very successful steer feeder. He was further noted because he kept a yoke of oxen. His home was a mile farther from the schoolhouse than was ours; and as Jake's way to school was past our home he would pick me up, throw me on his shoulders, which were amply broad, and would find great sport in pretending to throw me off in a big snow drift — and rather often it was not pretense. Jake became Mr. Groves and then the Hon. Jacob Groves. He served several terms in the state legislature. He was a useful, industrious, honest man, not brilliant, and he never had the least suspicion that he was. He was sensible, far seeing, and of much more than average ability; quiet, modest. Such a man is a real asset to any community.

The schoolhouse to which Jake carried me had been a log building. It had been "weatherboarded" by nailing wide, unplaned oaken boards to the logs. The boards were put on horizontally. There was only one room, about twenty by thirty feet. Along three sides was a "desk" made by fastening a board, fully eighteen inches wide, against the wall and supporting it with pieces of two-by-four scantling sawed from the nearby oak woods. About six inches under this board was fastened another. The space between was for our books when not in use. We managed to conceal an astounding number of pieces of wood, string, leather, and of nails, knives, and balls, in this space. A bench made by driving legs into auger holes bored in rough planks stood in front of the desk. Generally we were compelled to sit with our faces to the wall. As a reward for being unusually quiet — the greatest crime that could be committed in that school was to make a noise — or possibly for having a good lesson, one was permitted to sit with his back against the desk and look out into the room. The room was heated by one large stove that devoured much wood. The floor of the room had never been scrubbed. About once a month the teacher swept it with a worn-out broom. The teacher's desk was in one corner. Near it was the water bucket with a big gourd or tin dipper — the dipper very frequently made a mysterious disappearance. The responsibility for this was nearly always put on the shoulders of Jake Groves or John McGinnis or Tom Lowary. In the corner at the teacher's desk was a supply of tough, supple "switches" from the thicket not far away. These switches were from six to eight feet long.

They had been carefully selected and the teacher was expert with such aids to education.

I had five teachers in this schoolhouse. One was a woman, who taught the first summer term that I attended. She did not know much and she did not know well what she did know. The man who taught the second winter term that I attended was ignorant, conceited, vulgar, and brutal. He had an accomplishment of which he was very proud: sitting at his desk, he could hit the very center of the hot stove ten feet away every time he unloaded his mouth of the accumulated tobacco juice. This would have been more remarkable if he had not practised so diligently. The teacher of the second summer term I attended was so crippled that he could not do farm work. That was the reason he was employed to teach the school. He was not so ignorant as the others; he was not conceited or brutal or vulgar. He was really kind-hearted and gentle and refined. He had that most happy and desirable of all endowments — a great capacity for friendship, and that is productive in kind! He disliked to teach school. That was because "keeping order" was the important three-fourths of teaching school. A teacher was successful and esteemed as he was "severe" and this teacher was kind. He was so happy the last day of the term that he laughed and laughed hysterically and the tears were often in his eyes.

When I was seven years of age a new school building was ready for occupancy some weeks after the beginning of the winter term. As the winter terms did not begin until the last of September, it was probably about the first of January when the new building was occupied. It was even nearer to my home than was the old. It was scarcely more than an eighth of a mile away. My schooling was in that building until I went to Quincy to attend the high school there.

I did not go to school, after I was nine years of age, until the corn was all cribbed, which was not until some time in December; for I could "take up the down row" when the corn was husked. I had to leave school March first and go to work in the fields. More, I was often sick — there was much sickness among school children in those days and I managed always to connect with more than my share; and I was everlastingly getting hurt. Several times there was trouble with the teacher. As a result of all this my average attendance at school, from my tenth to my nineteenth year, was not more than seven weeks a year. I can remember that one winter we had a really competent teacher. The fifth week I attended I sprained my ankle severely. Everyone had a different remedy. The result was that in a week my leg and foot were swollen from the knee to the end of the toes until the many admiring examiners thereof would exclaim, "Looks like the skin must bust!" I suffered much pain, and I think the mental suffering of my dear mother was more than my physical suffering. O wonderful, wonderful mother love! After weeks I could get around with one crutch: a stout stick with a six-inch piece nailed to one end. I attempted for the first time to get out of doors. There were three steps from the porch to the ground. I slipped and fell. I did not go to school any more that winter.

No one had yet heard of the "germ theory of disease" or knew anything about quarantining or hygiene or sanitation. Nearly all disease was attributed to "malaria," which was the "miasma" that arose from the swamps and sluggish streams and ponds. The mosquito was known only as a pest that bit. The disease that was not due to malaria was due to "biliousness" or the act of God. Man was helpless against the production of malaria as he was against the might of the Almighty. One winter every child in school had "scarlet rash," which was a light form of scarlet fever. Of course there was no isolation, no quarantine. Scarlet rash had "to go through the neighborhood." It always had gone that way. On account of the ignorant medication and frequent neglect, some very serious results came from this scarlet rash. A serious result to me was that I was in school very little that winter. Another winter everyone had the mumps. Of course someone "brought measles to school," and that disease went the rounds. Some got the measles several times; had the common measles, the German measles, the black measles, the coughing measles, and some other varieties, and some were so greedy they broke the rule and actually had the same variety twice. Don't tell me you can't have measles twice! Add to measles, mumps, and "putrid sore throat," the other diseases that everyone was supposed to have at some time or another, such as typhoid fever, delayed whooping cough, malarial fever, miasmatic fever, bilious fever, dysentery, lung fever, quinsy, and boils — boils of the big kind, with or without a core, and "them that burrow" — no one had ever heard of a carbuncle — and the total was enough to keep a child out of school a great deal of the time. And no better producer of colds and "sore throat" and teeth torture than the unventilated one-stove schoolroom of those days has ever been invented or discovered.

SOME TEACHERS AND STUDIES

CONSIDERING the time and the place, the teachers in the new building were unusually good. They were the very best to be obtained; for after the effect of the first tax bills that provided for the new building had rapidly worn away, our neighbors took a great pride in the school. I have never known people more desirous that their children should have all the education that they could provide. The parents were unschooled; and what proved them far superior to many, they knew that they were ignorant, they put a value on education, and they were ambitious for their children, whom they dearly loved. Family affection and fidelity were strong among them.

The last teacher I had in the old building and who was the first teacher in the new building was of educated parents. He had been sent to a small but good college, although family finances were those of all hardworking farmers in debt on the farm at the time. Once his mother enclosed fifty cents in her letter to him, telling him how she had put away ten cents at a time, and saying that he must spend it for a good time: to "buy a bit of cake and a mug of beer." There was no possible violence to the rules of English grammar or outrage on decent English that was not the constant and unconscious delight of every pupil of the school. I marvel at the invariable consistency of our use of bad English. The Stahl children, not exceptions to the universal law, soon acquired the English of their associates. My first teacher in the new building, Joseph A. Nevins, was especially careful of his speech; he used the very best English — that chaste and simple English that is so beautiful — and he observed all the rules of grammar. To him I owe the germination of my ambition to know what was that funny thing called English grammar. It was four or five years before that ambition was gratified. Then we had a teacher who it was alleged, and falsely, taught grammar. I got Pinneo's Grammar, and after a year or so Brown's Grammar and Green's Grammar. I learned a multitude of rules and could parse and diagram to the devil's taste, but with no practical result.

About this time, when I was twelve or thirteen years of age, my cousin, Horace N. Foltz, taught our school for a winter term and he recommended to me Quackenbos' First Lessons in English Composition, and I bought it. Mr. Foltz used good English; he knew good English; and he actually knew how to teach it; that is, to show a pupil how he could recognize good English, grammatical English, how to distinguish it from the other, and how to go about it to use good, grammatical English. I have yet that copy of Quackenbos' First Lessons in English Composition, and I must be "broke" and very hungry when money will buy it.

The Stahl children were almost the only ones who attempted more than spelling, reading, writing, and arithmetic; and many were able to get only small knowledge in these branches. Fully half of my teachers were really ignorant of other studies and therefore declared them useless; and to this agreed the parents and children of nearly all our neighbors. I was permitted to have a textbook on geography in the schoolroom and to study it there, but it was some years before the teacher was allowed to "take time from other children and their lessons that are of some use" to hear me recite. But when I was fourteen years of age there was a large class in geography in the school. I was the only one to study English composition in that school while I was one of its pupils; I studied it during only the term my cousin taught; and I recited at recess. While our neighbors were very desirous of their children being schooled, they had their own notions of what should be taught in the school; of what would be "useful."

My favorite study was mathematics. When I was eight years old I was quite famous because I "could work all the examples in the Partial Payments part of 'Ray's Third Part of Arithmetic.'" I was called upon to give exhibitions of this at grist mills, sorghum factories, and public sales. I actually thought out and proved a number of geometric propositions although I had never seen a textbook on geometry — or heard of one! There were many words that I had never heard or dreamed of, although when I was eleven I bought a copy of Webster's Academic Dictionary. It was my first purchase with my own money. I earned the money by "dropping corn" and digging thistles for a neighbor at twenty-five cents a day. I have the book yet.

The schools are not what they used to be! There was a big iron sink in the corner of the schoolroom at which all the pupils washed their hands when they came in at the end of recess and the noon hour. Generally there was no soap and we boys could not make a good job although we wiped our hands as hard as we could on our trousers or shirts — there was no towel. The girls wiped their hands on their handkerchiefs. But then girls' hands did not just ooze out dirt and, also, girls could find their handkerchiefs.

The water bucket stood in the sink and lucky indeed was the boy, who, while the school was in session, gained permission to get a drink and found the bucket empty. He was allowed to go to "the Stahl well" for a bucket of water and generally could have some other boy go with him. The greatest desire was to have the biggest slate in school; the next was to have a slate pencil that "marked red." After I had been in school for some years, some of the pupils had slates with the wooden frames wrapped with gaily colored yarn or flannel. We were told that this was to make them less noisy, but we knew better. We knew it was to make them more beautiful. Three or four pupils had slate pencils covered with red, white, and blue paper. I never had such treasures. Really never hoped to be so fortunate and rich. When we boys wished to erase something on a slate, we spat on it and rubbed it with the prominent parts of the palms of our hands and finished with the sleeve of our coat or shirt. Some of the girls used the palms of their hands; and some were so amusingly fastidious that they had bottles of water and "slate rags." I have seen more than one girl-fight because a slate rag had disappeared. Before I was through with the district school three or four of the pupils actually had sponges; but those of us that did not have sponges did not think much of them. The old means and measures of erasure were best. At least, they were good enough for us. And when we all stood up in one of the two spelling classes and the teacher gave out the words from Webster's Blue-Backed Speller, those with the sponges or paper covered pencils went up head no oftener than the others.

I MISS A DAY AT SCHOOL

When I was eleven years of age there came one day a woman "to help about the house." My mother had not been able to do her usual great amount of hard work for some time, and occasionally she had laid down during the day. But then my oldest sister, Emma, was a good housekeeper and she of the loving heart mothered us on occasions.

Then one morning very early two of our nearest neighbors came for an all-day visit, which was very surprising, for the neighbor women and my mother did not exchange these all-day visits. I thought these women should know better than to stay, for my mother was sick abed that morning. When I came from school that evening my father met me on the way to caution me not to be as noisy as usual at home, for my mother was sick and must be kept quiet. In the yard we met the doctor and he said to father that he would be back the next morning. "It's as the paper always says," he said; "mother and babe doing well."

How well I remember that day! It was a softly warm, sunshiny winter day. I had a new sister. It was a very beautiful day.

Twenty-five years later, the day of her burial, my mother said, "It was just such a day as this on which she was born; and about this time of the day." But that was not a beautiful day; not to any of us and least of all to the little mother.

The evening of that day that was beautiful, before I went to bed I was permitted to see my mother. I almost cried out when I saw her: her face was so white, and she looked smaller than I had ever seen her before. The woman who had come to help about the house pulled down the quilt, and there was my new sister curled up against my mother.

I did not think much of her. She was almost as red as mother was white. I did not admire her complexion, but I did not say so. Father had told me that I had "a new sister with black hair." Her hair *was* black, but I could not see that it was anything to brag about. I was disappointed in the new sister. She was so little and sleepy.

I did not know that on that day had come into my life a little babe that almost at once would be the sure promise of a rare personality of great loveliness, destined to grow into an influence of the utmost sweetness and benignity, in quality far beyond the power of words to express. It gave a new meaning to loyalty. It comprehended all of devotion. I cannot think of anything that would convey an adequate idea of it; but I have felt a likeness to it in a few pieces of music I have heard, written by a master and played by a master. O Sister, if I could do you justice! What I wrote would surpass anything that has ever been written! And my gift of words is so poor, my pen is so weak and dull!

My mother remained in bed. She was so little and white. I realized that she was very ill. One morning my father told me I should not go to school that day; and that I must play very quietly. I cannot remember that I played at all that day. I sat on the edge of the porch. The next day I went to school. And soon my mother was sitting in the big rocking chair with a quilt about her.

I think that after the first twelve months of the life of the new sister, her most constant companion and attendant was her sister Sarah, five years older. Surely no one could have been more faithful than was that sister. Almost as soon as the baby sister could walk the two would come to the field where I was at work. I see them now, walking so carefully along the fence row and then down the furrow to meet me.

Sometimes my work overtaxed me, and when I came from the field at noon or in the evening, after I had attended to my team, I would lie down on the porch for a few minutes, before I washed my dirty face and hands, and ate. And I remember that the baby sister would come and lie down beside me, and would cuddle up to me, resting her head on my arm. She began that when she was not two years old.

She could not have been more than three years old when she and Jack, that fearless, faithful dog, would come to the field where I was at work and would follow after me in the furrow — I can so plainly see her little plump, bare feet and legs! — her little sunbonnet or straw hat more often in her hand than on her head, until she was tired; and then she would lie on my coat spread on the grass in the fence corner, or on the grass itself, and rest, Jack lying beside her, one paw on her arm, his watchful head erect, his knowing eyes alert. Sometimes she would take a long nap there. Sometimes she would be rested when I had plowed once or twice around the long "land," and she and Jack would again begin their patient journey behind me and the plow. Sometimes I would put her astride one of the horses, she holding fast to the hames. But she liked better to ride on the rung between the handles of the plow, holding tight to each handle. How many, many miles she and Jack have walked behind me when I harrowed or when I cultivated corn!

The little mother called us "The Inseparables." Just to be with me seemed of all things best to content the little sister. So often I have heard the little mother say, "Why do you want to go out in the hot sun and dust?" and she always replied, "Oh, I just want to be with John."

Generally she was. And I cannot remember that in all the years, nor at any time of all her life, she ever did anything she knew I did not wish her to do. No, not once!

We were a busy family, but none was ever too busy for the little sister to "visit," as she would say, always tugging her little chair with her. My oldest sister did the sewing, in the afternoons when the housework no longer pressed; and I can see the little tot now, standing on the chair behind that sister, her arms around the sister's neck, watching each careful stitch the sister took, or the work of the wonderful machine. And I can see another sister (the one who stayed with the father and little mother to the end) working in the garden and keeping a watchful eye on a little four-year-old with blowing curls and laughing eyes and busy fingers, so hard at work on her especial little plants. She loved horses; and I can see her big brother Frank, who also loved horses, taking her for rides on the mare that was so high spirited, that could hardly be made to walk, but was always ready to run — I am not sure which of the three most enjoyed those rides; perhaps the little sister. (After a time I took her on that mare, and once, when she was only six years old, the mare ran away in the woods and threw us both. I held to the rein and stopped the mare. The little sister was badly bruised, but when I suggested that we walk the rest of the way, she stoutly refused and we rode the mare and brought home the cows as we had intended. I did not have to hint that we need not tell we had been thrown.) Our father was a grave and serious man, and no other of his children was ever familiar with him, but she actually played jokes on him, to the extent of hiding his hat; and he not only laughed, but chased her, pretending to be very angry and determined to whip her well, but never quite catching her. Of course the one most devoted, most loving, most dear to "our youngest and dearest," was the little mother.

The little sister was of the harum-scarum sort; lively, quick, exceedingly capable in disarranging things from your viewpoint and rearranging them according to her viewpoint. In memory of the brave missionary, her mother had named her Edith Judson. I named her Tipsy Topsy Turvey. She soon got rid of two-thirds of that; but for years she was called Topsy nearly altogether. When in time she made much use, and for her age brilliant use, of her pen, she generally used the name Topsy. I treasure a prize story she wrote when she was only fourteen, and that is signed Jess Judson. She used that pen-name more and more. It was the name she used as editor of a puzzle department, and then of a household department.

Harum-scarum she was, yet of the thoughtful, reliable sort. I remember that when she was three or four years of age and I was so weak from the fever and ague that I could not do much hard work, one of my tasks was to smoke the hams and shoulders and bacon and bags of sausage meat suspended from the ceiling of the building that was wash-house and smokehouse. Father was exceedingly particular about the smoking of the pork. Only green hickory could be used. Of course the fire could not be allowed to go out and on the other hand it must not be allowed to blaze more than a very little indeed, else it would heat the meat.

TWO PICTURES OF THE LITTLE SISTER

The one on the left is from a photo made about two years after she came to live with the author; the one on the right is from a photo made when she was six. Having her photo taken was a sudden decision of her mother and aunt when in town one day, and she regretted that she was not dressed to have her picture taken; especially that she had on her old shoes (the silk cloth gaiters then the vogue)

How many times when I had forgotten all about the meat, I would hear her call, "The fire is going out!" or, "The chips are blazing away up!"

She made such wonderful pictures with her lead pencil, on bits of paper or pieces of wood, whenever she saw fit. She never learned to do this; the gift to do it came with her into the world. She could make a good likeness of any face she saw; and also a distorted face, but yet a good likeness. But she liked best to draw beautiful scenes or designs.

When I left home to go to Quincy high school, she wrote me letters full of funny notions and funny expressions; full of quips and quirks and quaintness. And all were signed *Topsy Stahl.* I have one of those letters yet. It is dated fifty years ago. Human beings — some of us — do such odd things. An old man treasures pieces of yellowed paper.

CHAPTER VI

HIGH SCHOOL AND TEACHING

I GO TO HIGH SCHOOL

THE first Monday of December, 1879, I entered the Quincy, Illinois, High School. I feel safe in saying that a more bashful and awkward, altogether amusing and unpromising specimen of what was then grown in the tall brush never entered the door of that building. Fortunately I had a correct appraisement of myself. I observed the difference between the cut of my hair and that of the city boys; between my clothes and theirs; between my awkwardness and their polished manners. I knew when they were laughing at me, and that was frequently; and I knew that soon I had some real friends among my classmates: I amused them, but they liked me. I am writing this in the Florida bungalow of one of those friends; then a most mischievous, fun-loving, popular, pretty girl, well mannered, well clothed, well taught, who laughed at me and told me how much she admired my long, curly hair: and she praised, to my crimson face, my collar and tie; yet she was kind to me and was my champion at times, asserting stoutly that I was the smartest boy in the class. She never guessed one percent of the thankfulness and admiration of the bashful, awkward country boy! How much oftener we would show a little kindness to the poor and ignorant and shrinking and all others that have never had a fair opportunity, if only we could see the effect in gratitude and happiness and noble ambitions and better lives!

Yes, I was ignorant. Ignorant, compared with my classmates, of social usages. Very ignorant, also, because some things well taught in the lower grades of the Quincy schools were only names to me. Then, for further example, my classmates knew a great deal about ancient mythology and ancient peoples, and of these I knew "next to nothing at all." I was handicapped; greatly. But I soon saw that in some things I was the equal of the best of my classmates. For one thing, I could get from a premise to a correct conclusion quicker than any of them except two girls; and my teachers soon noticed this. I found, also, that I caught more readily and accurately the meaning and import of what the teachers told us than all but a very few of the pupils. My papers always got as high marks as any and once, the first winter, the teacher, who had given us a task in ancient history and had talked to us about it, said, "John is the only one in the class who has clearly understood what I wanted you to do."

Why was this? I thought then and I think now, that it was largely due to Ray's Arithmetic; Second Part! Of course, you smile; probably audibly. The chances are nineteen out of twenty that you never heard of that textbook before. Well, Ray's Arithmetic was in three parts, a book to each part. Part Two was mental arithmetic. You were not allowed to use pencil or slate or paper. You had to reason it out. Of course nothing in the nature of Algebra was known by the pupil, or allowed. An example to be solved was like this: "A hare has fifteen and one-half rods start of a dog. The hare jumps seven feet four inches and the dog six feet six inches. The hare makes five jumps while the dog makes six. In how many jumps will the dog overtake the hare and how far will he have gone, and how long did it take him to do it if he made fourteen jumps a minute?" Now that is easy and simple compared with some of the examples, as I can prove by any of my old readers who took a course in Ray's Arithmetic; Second Part. There were real puzzlers that began with, "If three leaps of the hound equals four of the fox and the difference between the leap of the hound and the leap of the fox equals the distance the horse will cover, etc., etc."

The Stahl children were the only ones in the district school ever to take Ray's Second Part. All the others jumped right from the First Part to the Third Part because the Second Part was " too hard and no sense in it anyway." When I was due to take the Second Part none of my teachers had ever had it and they declared emphatically that they could not teach it and would not if they could. My mother was a firm believer in the *efficacy* of mental arithmetic. She did not perceive any direct benefit from my solving the problem about the English hare and hound and horse, or about the queer way of measuring the two fields; but she was sure that solving those problems was good mental exercise; that it taught one to reason things out and to remember. She was my teacher when my textbook was Ray's Arithmetic; Second Part. She was my teacher when I had other textbooks. She was the best teacher I ever had. She was the only person I ever knew who could readily solve all the problems in Ray's Second Part. And always she was patient; unbelievably patient — unless you had such a mother. I have always felt that much of whatever ability I had to follow through a logical process, in high school or elsewhere, went back to the hours I spent with her and Ray's Second Part of Arithmetic.

I was in the Quincy High School until the last Friday of February 1880, and then from the first Monday of September 1880, until the close of school in June 1881. In all fifty-one weeks; and in this time I took the four years' course, one hundred and sixty weeks; I recited with the freshmen, the sophomores, the juniors, and the seniors the first winter; with the sophomores, the juniors, and the seniors the second winter. I conducted a puzzle department in a weekly paper; helped to fold and mail another weekly paper; did some work about the only theater in the city, called the Opera House; collected for a doctor the second winter; and both the first and second winters I wrote for a dozen farm papers. I believe that I did thorough school work. I know that I did conscientious work. I was valedictorian of my class. I got my share of the flowers. The newspapers were as kind to me as to anyone. In fact, the *Herald* gave me special mention.

DEBTS I OWE

TWO of my high school teachers, Miss Margaret E. Kenney and Miss Louise M. Robbins, were very kind and helpful. To them I owe much. Hundreds of their pupils will gratefully say the same. Katherine Holland Brown is one of them. But to Wm. B. Corbyn, D.D., Episcopal rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd and Principal of the Quincy High School, I owe more than to any other of my high school teachers. He was a nervous old man, sometimes trenchant in speech, never intending to be unkind, but knowing that sometimes with the young honeyed words are far from kindness. He was a very scholarly man and a loving student of all that is best in English literature. He was my friend from the beginning; helped me much while I was in the high school; gave me letters to influential people when I went to St. Louis; and he it was who had me promise to read some of Shakespeare — at least forty lines — every evening during the first ten years after I left the high school. I kept that promise.

The little skill, if any, I may have in the use of good English I owe most of all, perhaps nearly altogether, to my frequent reading of the King James version of the Holy Bible and the works of William Shakespeare. To my mother I owe the beginning of my appreciation of the beautiful English of the King James version. To Dr. Corbyn I owe the study of Shakespeare that has revealed a wealth of beautiful English that alone is literary riches. Every father should, if necessary using the utmost persuasive means, have his children read every day in the King James version of the Bible and the works of William Shakespeare. But he can't do it.

One of the tasks given me in the high school was to determine the percentage of Anglo-Saxon words in the first Act of "Julius Caesar." Dr. Corbyn added that I study carefully the meaning or meanings of every word about which I consulted Webster's Unabridged — that was before the day of the International. I found this so interesting that I went through the entire tragedy, sitting up late at night at the work — no, not work, but play. There are very few things as interesting as the study of the parentage and development of words. Many of them have grown in a surprising way.

July 10, 1890, a number of the graduates of the Quincy High School met to form the Quincy High School Alumni Association. This meeting was at the residence of Miss Ida Lawrence, later Mrs. Thomas Slack, and President of the New York City Federation of Woman's Clubs. I was made chairman of that meeting. At a later meeting, while I was in the West, officers were chosen and I was unanimously elected president. I held that position as long as I made Quincy my headquarters.

THE PUPIL BECOMES TEACHER

Two days after I graduated from the high school I was at work in the harvest field. I taught a country district school the next two winters and the summer following. While I was teaching I read law in the evenings; and I spent my vacations, and some months more, in a law office.

I know that as a teacher I was not a brilliant success. I was weak on "keeping order." But I know that my pupils learned fast; that where I taught my second winter term and the spring term following, I taught more pupils than had ever been taught in that school before; and that my pupils liked me and some loved me with the true, honest love of boys and girls. Even yet I have from time to time evidences of that love.

In the spring of 1927, when I was frequently on the air from a well-known Chicago radio station, I received a letter from a woman in Nebraska saying that she had tuned in on that station the evening before; a man was talking; and almost at once she had said to her husband, " Why, that sounds just like the voice of my old teacher, Mr. Stahl "; and when the speaker had finished the announcer said he was I. Did I remember little Ella McCormick? And she told me about herself and her husband and their children.

Did I remember little Ella McCormick? She was eight years old when I taught my second term and boarded with Mr. and Mrs. Sam McGill. They had just adopted her. She had been in an orphan's home. I have never known another child quite so affectionate and hungry for love. Her teacher soon loved her. She was a model pupil. I had seen her last in 1883 — nearly forty-five years had come and gone when I received her letter. I had not heard of her for thirty-five years. Two months after I received that letter, a friend of 1881, who was her neighbor, wrote me that she had died.

One of my odd, silly treasures is an autograph album, very ornate as to binding, presented to me at Christmas by the pupils of the school I taught the second winter. It was a tremendous outlay for those pupils. It contains their autographs, so laboriously and awkwardly written, with many flourishes.

My second school was known as " a hard school to govern." It was proud of its consistent record of driving out teacher after teacher before he had finished his term. I undertook to teach the winter term because I was offered nearly one-half more than the current wages — in those days the teacher of a country district school got wages and not, as now, a salary. I had a peculiar contract with the directors, which I drew with much legal phraseology. One knows more law when he has read Blackstone and others for a year than he ever knows later. I am sure that contract would have amazed any court and would have been held of no force as well. It made me a dictator and nothing less; and the result was that I taught not only the winter term, but the summer term following. I remember that among the pupils that trouped into the schoolroom the first morning as I rang the cracked bell was Charlie Leach, nearly six feet tall and broad of shoulder and generally hefty. Charlie took a seat in the corner farthest from the teacher's desk. As the hub-bub finally quieted down and the teacher started his first talk to his pupils, grains of shelled corn dashed against a window. Charlie looked so ponderously solemn that I was sure the corn came from his capacious trousers pocket. But before the day was over Charlie was helping to keep quiet some of the pupils in his corner and before a week Charlie would have " fought at the drop of a hat " if anyone had attempted to defy me.

Among my pupils were " the five Baker children." Those four words meant much. Their father was a " locust preacher." He was the father of twenty-three other children — at that time he had his third wife — and was proud of his production. He did not know what had become of a dozen of them, but as eleven remained with him and he refused to do hard work, it was only reasonable that he should be unconventional in some of his actions. Even Jim Smith acknowledged that. Jim's smokehouse had been " cleaned clean," as he put it; and Jim could smell bacon frying where bacon had not fried before. But there was never any proof. When the five Baker children presented themselves at my schoolhouse door they had just one school book — an old Third Reader that had been given them. Charlie, thick-necked and redheaded, was a bully and I put the other four in his charge and they were the most quiet and studious pupils in the school, except little Ella McCormick and Arthur Rice, who occupied the front seats nearest the teacher's desk. Charlie was the best disciplinarian I ever knew. If he could not work his will perfectly during school hours on his three brothers, he would pummel them unmercifully during recess and the noon hour; or so thoroughly after school that the good effect lasted well into the next morning session. Once I nearly spoiled this arrangement by throwing Charlie, who made a face at me when I disagreed with him about his manners, against the door with such force as to split the panel. But we came to an understanding almost as soon as Charlie recovered his faculties. I expelled three of the pupils. Two of them I allowed to return. "They ran the teacher out" of two schools, the territory of which adjoined that of mine, the winter I taught that school; and most of the pupils of those schools came to mine. The schoolroom was indeed crowded for I had ninety-six pupils on the roll, although when I was hired the directors showed me that there were less than forty children of school age in the district. However, among the ninety-six were several that I am sure were past the school age of twenty-one.

I very much enjoyed my work as teacher while thoroughly disliking it! It was very disagreeable to me to "keep order"; it was a real satisfaction to note the progress made by the pupils in their studies and I was happy to have the sincere friendship of my pupils. The teacher who gives his best will find that he also receives. To this day I prize the friends I gained in the little district school.

I think I may well claim to have been busy during my years in the high school and then as teacher. I have spoken of the time I gave to the study of law. In 1875 my first article for a farm paper appeared in one published in Toledo, Ohio, and I cannot remember its name! Within a year I was writing for half a dozen farm papers. Before I went to high school my name appeared on the editorial page of the *Ohio Farmer* as "Western Associate Editor." While in the high school I began to edit a monthly farm paper published in Quincy and I continued this work while teaching. The last term I taught I was writing regularly for more than a dozen farm papers. I was using my pen to make money that I might be a lawyer.

That I was doing this must be blamed on that Quackenbos book. Before I had gone through it I was writing for the local paper, and its Editor, George W. Cyrus, gave me much encouragement. Of course I wrote poetry! I was guilty of that crime for ten years. I was actually paid for some of it. It was natural, I think inevitable, that I should write about farming. I was a farmer boy. My father was as much a scientific farmer as a man could be in western Illinois in the 1870's. We subscribed for farm papers. Their contents were largely letters from and articles by farmers. I knew that I could tell something worth while about farming. My first article was accepted. I cannot recall that I ever had an article rejected by a farm paper before I began to write about rural mail delivery.

I QUIT THE LAW

NOVEMBER 23, 1883, Dr. Corbyn wrote me a long letter in which he said:

> I can well understand the difficulty you find in deciding upon your future course. Journalism has now become almost as much of a profession as any of those formerly called such. The law is one of the noblest of human aspirations when gone about in the right way. So is Journalism as our modern civilization has made it. The editor of today, if he has a true conception of his position, has an unlimited power for good, or he may abuse his opportunity for infinite evil.
>
> In your case, if you will permit an old-time friend to suggest, I am inclined to think that journalism is to be your calling, though I would not have you give up the law without due consideration.

As will presently appear, I had at that time a good editorial position in St. Louis. When I took that position I yet intended to make the practise of law my life work and I planned to finish in St. Louis the required course, which I had almost completed.

I suppose that Dr. Corbyn's letter aided me to decide to give up the law and continue my editorial work. My study of the law had shown me the possibilities in a lawyer's career if he established a reputation for absolute honesty and was hard working; especially if he specialized on corporation law. I have always thought and yet think that I would have been happier if I had been a lawyer. But in 1883 I was more disposed to consider usefulness than happiness; at least more disposed to put usefulness above happiness than I would now. The pen had been active in my fingers for eight years; at that time I was writing regularly for more than twenty of the leading farm papers; it was plain that I could exert a wider influence as a writer than as a lawyer; and, further, what is written is more permanent than the spoken word. Nor was the financial side without consideration. I cannot say that I was the best writer on farm subjects at that time; but I must confess that I was the most prolific and I know it was said that I was the most popular. My income from my pen (as editor and contributor) was all of five hundred dollars a month. That was equivalent to more than a thousand dollars a month now. It was pleasant to increase my bank account while finding much enjoyment in life — in those days in St. Louis a young man could have much recreation for a few dollars. No matter what the critics say, the best plays are those we see when we are young, from the "Two-Bit Heaven," as the balcony, perhaps the gallery, was called in those days. Even more pleasurable than the increase in the bank account was it to receive hundreds of letters saying how much my articles contained of instruction or enjoyment. In justice to myself I must say that the knowledge that I was benefitting others who might be numbered by many thousands had much more weight with me than the financial rewards. My pen gave me much wider audience than I could ever hope to have as a lawyer. I took a serious view of life. I quit the law.

CHAPTER VII

ALSO EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

MY PROFITABLE PEN

THE Quincy farm paper which I began to edit in December 1879, and which I continued to edit, was on July 1, 1883, consolidated with the *Medical Call,* a monthly journal for country doctors. The consolidation was called the *Farmer's Call.* I bought a half interest in the *Farmer's Call* and was its only editor, holding that position until I consolidated it with my *Illinois Farmer* a quarter of a century later. The *Farmer's Call* started as a weekly with a colored cover. It was all but impossible to make a weekly farm paper with a colored cover pay at that time and in December 1883, I bought the other half of the paper and took off the cover. It was always so published after that date.

Among the score of farm papers for which I was writing in 1883 were two in St. Louis: the *Journal of Agriculture,* a weekly, and the *South and West,* a semi-monthly. In August 1883, while on a hunting trip in central Nebraska, I received from the publisher of the *Journal of Agriculture* a flattering offer to become assistant editor of that periodical. That night I was on my way to Quincy, where I arranged to continue as editor of the *Farmer's Call,* while accepting the St. Louis position. In those days I had my mother's faculty of getting along well with six hours of sleep of each twenty-four. When I had been associate editor of the *Journal of Agriculture* three weeks I received from the *South and West* an offer to edit that publication at a larger salary than I was getting. I accepted that offer and held the position for some years. I divided my time between St. Louis and Quincy. It was fortunate for me that Hon. Shelby M. Cullom had not fought through the Interstate Commerce Law and others had not put teeth in it; for I had an annual pass over the railway between the two cities. I could throw crosswise the cushions of two seats in the day coach and sleep the sleep of the honest farmer. From the spring of 1884 I had a partner in the publication of the *Farmer's Call:* A. S. Core. He did not presume to do any editorial work, but until 1893 he attended to all the details of getting out the publication and mailing it. This partnership continued until 1897.

Within a few years I found it advisable to give up my position as editor of the *South and West,* for my *Farmer's Call* demanded more and more of my time and energy; and on that account I also reduced steadily the number of farm papers for which I wrote.

Always, whether I wrote as editor or as contributor, I wrote of actual farm experience, discussing failures as freely as successes. I did not concern myself about style, but wrote as the words came to me — the homely, simple words to which I was accustomed. Both made a strong appeal to farm people. They knew I was one of them.

I managed to put a good deal of fun into my articles for the farm papers. It was said of me that I was "everlastingly stirring up the animals." I was most successful about this when writing for the *Ohio Farmer.* One reason was that the owner and managing editor, M. J. Lawrence, believed that the more spicy and readable the columns of his paper the more attractive they would be to the farmer and his family; and that solid instruction need not be sacrificed to secure a sprightly style. When I wrote for his paper one of the associate editors was Waldo F. Brown. He was a modest, cultured man of remarkable memory. I remember a night he stayed with me in St. Louis in 1884. We sat in front of the little fireplace that burned wood in my large, old-style bedroom — it was early winter — and talked about the authors we liked and he recited to me, faultlessly, all of Holland's " Bittersweet." I will always count myself fortunate indeed that into my life came the influence of Waldo F. Brown. Yet I was mean enough, while more than respecting — while loving — Waldo F. Brown, to poke fun at him and ridicule some of the things he recommended. A good deal of my writing was controversial. I was continually disputing the wisdom and profitableness of the recommendations of the other contributors. Some of them wrote more from theory and the books than from actual practice. I wrote altogether from experience; some of it sad and financially distressing. I have not greatly changed. I believe in the very best of farming; study, experiment, listening to the successful; hard work at the right time; clean, thorough culture; better than good seeds, breeds, varieties; and so on; but I am yet sure that the practical farmer must rub off about ten percent of the fine point of the farming urged on him by the professor in an agricultural college and the head of a department of an agricultural experiment station.

I was allowed wide latitude by the editors of most farm papers. However, my contributions for some of the farm papers were always very serious and sedate. For one or two my work went best if it was positively ponderous. I think I liked to write best of all for the *Farm Journal, Country Gentleman, Rural New Yorker, Texas Farm and Ranch,* and *Southern Cultivator.* But I enjoyed my work for all of the papers. Once good Wilmer Atkinson, editor and owner of the *Farm Journal,* sent me a list of the papers in which he had seen my articles so far that month. There were twenty-two on the list. He suggested in his trenchant, yet courteous, diplomatic way that if I did not write so much what I wrote would often be much better. Of course that is not exactly the language he used, but that is what it meant and I understood it well enough. It led to some reform.

It was a period of great prosperity for farm papers.

They still had the field to themselves; there was only a little competition by the town and city papers. However, a sharp competitor was the New York *Weekly Tribune,* for which I wrote for years. The leading importers of heavy horses from France or Scotland made a profit of several hundred percent. One day I saw an importer sell for four thousand dollars cash a Percheron stallion that to that moment had cost him less than five hundred dollars. I was not surprised that he gave me a large order for advertising. There was a large profit for the aggressive, intelligent breeder of cattle and more for the importer of Holstein-Friesian and other breeds. The breeders of pure-bred swine were aggressive, liberal advertisers: they could well afford to be. At no other period have there been such highly intelligent, aggressive, courageous manufacturers of farm machinery. They were liberal advertisers. The self-binder, the sulky plow, the disc harrow, and a dozen other farm machines were being popularized. Farm papers could pay well for the right sort of stuff for their reading columns. I not only edited the *Farmer's Call* and the *South and West,* but I solicited the advertising for them by personal visits. I did much of my writing on the train; the rest in my hotel room at night. I became acquainted with the leading advertisers in farm papers: we were friends. They read the papers in which they advertised, and they knew popular writing. I know that some of them said to the advertising solicitors of other farm papers that it would help them to get advertising if their papers had my contributions. Very large advertisers in farm papers were the P. P. Mast Co. and Mast, Foos & Co., of Springfield, Ohio. P. P. Mast was president of both. It is improbable that he placed the advertising of these two big corporations; yet I know that I always went to him for the order that went through his advertising agents in Cincinnati. Others also did that. Once when I called to see him he was engaged with the advertising solicitor of a prominent farm paper. The door of his private office, near which I was seated, was slightly ajar. I heard him say, " If your people haven't nerve enough to pay John Stahl his price for his stuff, I don't believe big space in your paper would pay me." I sent that paper an article early the next morning, naming a stiff price. It was published promptly.

As I remember it, Wilmer Atkinson paid me the highest price I received from any farm paper. His *Farm Journal* was a boiled down monthly, with more than half a million subscribers; far more than any other farm paper then had. His columns were twelve inches deep. He paid me as high as fifty dollars a column. The stuff had to be epigrammatic. I had no other friend so critical or so helpful, among the editors. I came to love him. And when he wrote me he addressed me as "My Son John." That touched me. I believe he had no son. The place of a son was taken by his nephew, Arthur H. Jenkins, the present principal owner and manager of the paper.

Another good friend among the agricultural editors was Elbert S. Carman, editor and owner of the *Rural New Yorker*. In 1883 he wished me to come to New York and take charge of his paper. I have before me at this moment a long letter from him, written with lead pencil on sheets of print paper. He writes that he must have "a man with a head on him and a conscience in him. I have tried two already, from agricultural colleges. They don't answer. Such a man as I must have it is hard to get. For the *right man* I know of few positions of better ultimate promise."

He offered me double the salary he first named. But I was making more, and I did not go to New York. Often I have thought it would have been better for me to have done so.

I have before me another letter from Mr. Carman. He had asked me to send him my photo. He wrote: "The picture is that of a bright, snappy young man who is sure to succeed in life if he doesn't *kill himself with overwork.*"

Yes, I was busy. You have probably already guessed that!

I WIN SOME PRAISE

I SUPPOSE I wrote most carefully for the two papers of which I was editor. The *South and West* was more "literary" than the *Farmer's Call.* It had many subscribers in towns and cities. My *Farmer's Call* stuck closely to farming. The publishers of the *South and West* never once in the slightest way indicated any editorial policy to me. I was given a free hand. During the years I edited that publication I met only one person connected with the corporation that owned the paper, except that once the president of the corporation dropped in for a few minutes to dictate a telegram and some letters. The *South and West* was for the South rather than the West. Especially was it for the New South. That I might write better for it and the Southern farm papers, I made frequent trips into the South. I was of the North, but I sympathized with the South. The war between the States had, of course, treated it harshly; some parts of it cruelly. War and a law suit are alike: both sides are injured. Much the greater part of the South was injured more by the "carpetbagger era" than by the war. I realized that, and my feeling for the South was reflected in my editorials. That brought me needed and valuable friends. Many marvelled that an outspoken Republican of the North should have such warm friends in the South. All eighty percent of the Southerners wanted was fair play.

The *Southern Cultivator,* Atlanta, Georgia, the second oldest farm paper in the United States, gave me a title that indicated that I was a friend of the South: it called me General! It said that "Gen. John M. Stahl is the most prominent of agricultural writers." This was in 1887. A year later the *Texas Farm and Ranch,* second only to the *Southern Cultivator* at that time, declared that I was "considered one of the ablest writers now before the American people, and his opinions have more weight than those of any other agricultural writer." The *Drover's Journal* declared that I was the "ablest agricultural writer in the country," and the Atlanta (Ga.) *Journal* that I was " one of the most brilliant men and ablest writers of the country, an editor, orator, and Christian gentleman." The importance of such expressions lies in the esteem in which was evidently held the man who was leading the campaign for the delivery of mail to farmers and was taking more advanced ground in road improvement than any other audible farmer. The work of my pen aided both directly and indirectly in my work for the farmers.

Sometimes there is praise that is more significant than words. When my *Farmer's Call* had so grown that I felt that I should give it all my attention, although I had been able to assemble around it a number of brainy, earnest workers, I resigned as editor of the *South and West.* I was told by the publishers that they did not care to keep the paper if I insisted on leaving it. They sold it.

I counted as praise for my work in agricultural journalism the movement to have President-elect Harrison choose me for Secretary of Agriculture. I was only twenty-eight years old. I never had the least desire to be Secretary of Agriculture or to hold any other public office. I was sure that properly my work was with my pen. But that I should have so many friends in all parts of the country that thought me fit to hold high office encouraged me greatly — and often encouragement was needed — to continue in my work, for example, to have the national government expend in delivering mail to farmers an amount estimated by the Post Office Department to be three times the total expense of that Department at that time!

One of the first papers to endorse me was *City and Country,* which recommended me as " a practical man " and thought " the president could not make a more fitting choice." The *Western Plowman* noted in an editorial of hearty endorsement that " prominent farmers of the South " were urging my appointment, because, as they said, there was " no one else on whom the South could so solidly unite "; but, said the *Plowman,* " this is not because Mr. Stahl has given them any political comfort, but because he is a fair-minded, aggressive man. With a great popularity, East, West, North, and South, he would not represent a section of the country, but the entire nation." The *Texas Farm and Ranch* said, in a lengthy editorial, that I possessed "every personal qualification for Secretary of Agriculture, and would fill it with credit and distinction." In 1888 that paper had already reached such standing that no farm paper exerted a greater influence among farmers, nor had any farm editor warmer friends than Frank P. Holland, its editor. He was its editor for nearly fifty years. Truly he was of God's nobility. I could not wish for a better friend than I found in Frank P. Holland from the very day we first met, in 1883. He founded *Holland's Magazine* and to him far more than anyone else is due its marked success. He died in 1928.

I think the support of no one else gave me quite as much pleasure as that of Henry W. Grady. In 1888 few men not in public life enjoyed as great popularity as he. He deserved it all, and more. In the *Texas Farmer* Jeff D. Welborn, active in the interests of Southern farmers, had a long letter in which he stated that Mr. Grady had written him that he was heartily in favor of my selection. Mr. Welborn's letter stated that he prepared letters urging my selection and "I commenced the work with my first letter to the *Inter-Ocean* of Chicago, and had that and other letters to leading northwestern papers printed in circular form, and I got down my press guide and mailed these circulars to every western paper." I prized the goodwill of such a man as Welborn, because he was a "dirt farmer" who had struggled against poverty and other adverse circumstances, and although he knew me only by my writings and published addresses, he knew that I could and did sympathize with farmers; I was one of them, knowing their problems and discouragements. Once after a farmer meeting I had addressed, I was in my hotel room when there came to their room next to mine two farmers, with some friends. I could not help hearing their conversation, and the loud tones in which they spoke showed that it was not confidential. They were talking about Stahl for Secretary of Agriculture. Finally one farmer said: "Well, I'm for Stahl with both feet, both hands, and my tongue. He's my man. By Jiminy, he's hopped clods barefooted!"

That was praise! I knew then that in my writing I had used language the farmers understood!

I BECOME LESS AMBITIOUS

EACH year my *Farmer's Call* demanded more of my time. By 1900 I had quit writing for other farm papers altogether. In that year I began the publication of the *Illinois Farmer*. I gave my farm papers all the time I devoted to business. Instead of writing for more than a score of farm papers, I wrote for only two. And after some years I combined them.

I gave more and more of my time to things other than my business, as will presently appear. I traveled a great deal. First I saw the United States thoroughly; then Mexico and Canada. Then I went to Europe. I read much. I had many friends and enjoyed their society. More and more I have come to prize sincere friends. I am sure that of the things I have possessed, none other are so to be prized as true friendships. Why should man wear out his strength of body and mind and crucify his soul to get more money than he and his family can ever really need? Not so very long ago a New York millionaire, knowing that he must soon die, said that his life had been a failure compared with the life of his brother, who had been content with a modest competence and had given himself time to travel and read books and to admire lakes and paintings. The millionaire said that no one but a clown in a show wore more than one suit of clothes at a time; the sensible person ate only three plain meals a day; and no person needed more than one shelter over his head. Old Plutarch, who in his essays said so many things worth careful consideration, expressed the same thought. My papers yielded me a good living and something more. I saved something. My experience in agricultural journalism was satisfactory to me and I yet believe that I lived a commonsense life.

I moved to Chicago in 1893, but my papers were always printed in Quincy. For fourteen years I had for manager there a man worthy of words of unstinted praise. His name is A. Otis Arnold. A man in his early twenties, he took charge of my Quincy office May 1, 1902. November 9, 1916, he became sole owner of the *Illinois Farmer and Farmer's Call.* At that date he had edited and published for several years a successful mail order magazine. He is now the owner of a poultry paper of large circulation. He has served three terms in the state legislature of Illinois. He has been Grand Master of the 115,000 Illinois Odd Fellows. I could not have accomplished what I did had it not been for A. Otis Arnold. A few years ago he wrote me one of the half-dozen most highly prized letters I have ever received. In it he referred to the fact that during our years of business association there was never the least bit of misunderstanding between us. He gave me credit, after his father, for " starting me along the lines of honest business methods and square dealing." He closed with: " To you I owe everything in giving me the right start."

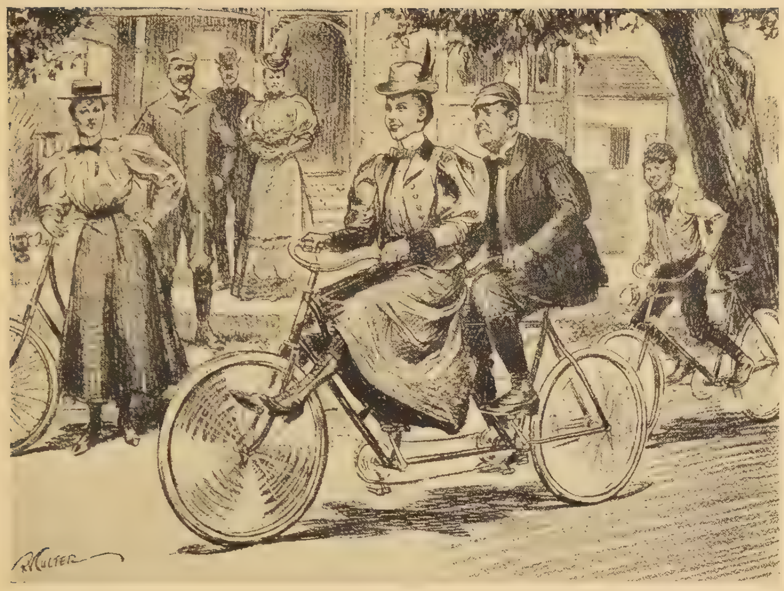
When I had written the above I began to write about the boys, the young men, and the young women that during forty-two years had begun their business careers in my offices. And after working on this for nearly two hours, trying to make my brain put in fifty words, that which my heart would require fully a thousand to express — my heart has always been more active than my brain — I am compelled to write here (as there is like cause in many other places herein) that the limits set on this book prohibit my writing more than to make those limits an excuse. Here (and let this say the same thing in the other places) I can only say that I would indeed that my readers might have an inkling of the esteem and goodwill that often reached to sincere affection among those, of whom I was one, who toiled in my offices. The worth of the letters I get from my former co-workers can not be expressed in the terms of the coin of any material realm.

REVOLUTION IN FARM JOURNALISM

An inevitable result of the favorable conditions for farm papers in the late seventies and the eighties was such a large number of them that competition made the conditions much less favorable. Several things the farm papers advocated, and from the best of motives, made conditions yet less favorable.

Like the editors of other farm papers, I heartily favored the Hatch bill for agricultural experiment stations. My advocacy was all the warmer because of the helpful friendship of Mr. Hatch. Those stations have put hundreds of free bulletins and reports, containing the very latest and best agricultural information, in the hands of the farmer. Many thousand copies have been printed of each of some of these bulletins. They have reduced the dependence of the farmer on the farm paper.

A like result followed from the farmers' institutes held in almost every county each year, or four times each year, in many states. The farm papers did more to bring about the farmers' institute and to develop it than all other agencies combined. The usefulness to farmers of the national Department of Agriculture has been increased a hundredfold, and this has been advocated by the farm papers. The advertising of certain novel farm implements and machines, which was so extensive that it alone almost paid for publishing a farm paper, made necessary a less and less amount of advertising of these implements and machines; and there have been only a few novelties of like character to take their place. A dozen competing manufacturers of a farm machine, the reaper or the hay press, for example, have been combined into one, and possibly the advertising discontinued altogether. For years the advertising of pure-bred animals



The Gay Nineties. The fellow with the tandem was always popular, but paid for it in the long run. (From *Life*, copyright 1925, LIFE Publishing Co.)

Mississippi River Steamboat. The *Gem City*, named after Quincy, Illinois. (Picture furnished by Mr. C. L. Adams, Quincy, Illinois)

Old Wind Mill to grind grain at Golden, Adams County, Illinois. This was called an old mill when the author was a boy; it is still in use. (Courtesy Mr. Harlo F. Selby, Golden, Ill.)

was extensive and profitable to the breeder or importer as well as the farm paper; and this extensive advertising was inevitably more or less suicidal — it removed the need of it. But most responsible of all for a change in conditions and of such depth and extent as to work a little side revolution in the journalism of this country, of real importance and greater significance, yet scarcely noticed, and noticed least of all by the farmers who are the most directly affected, is the delivery of mail to farmers. Shortly after the mail was delivered each week day at the farmer's front gate, farmers began to take daily papers. The number of farmer subscribers to a daily paper increased steadily. Farmers had been taught to write letters; to ask for what they wanted. They wrote to the editor. The result was a change in the daily paper. This began with much fuller and better market reports on farm products. Then came the daily weather report and crop reports. Next the daily paper got someone well versed in farming to write up the crop reports, local, state, national, and foreign, with suggestions about the effect a short crop here and a larger crop there might have on prices. Then the daily started a farm department, well edited, and that gave the farmer such information as he wished and generally more promptly than the weekly, semimonthly, or monthly farm paper. As a result, the progressive, reading farmer was taking a daily paper that gave him as good agricultural matter as any farm paper can give and in addition it gave him crop, market, and weather reports, not once a week, or twice a month, but every day. This had a big effect on the farmer and on the farm paper, and it had almost as great an effect on the daily paper. The daily got more and more in close touch with the farmer; it became responsive to farmer sentiments and opinions — more so than nine farm papers of each ten; and as a result it became the better spokesman of the best class of farmers. The well edited daily papers led in forming farmer opinion and also led in expressing farmer opinion.

The farm papers have found a new field for themselves.

They have taken on more and more the monthly magazine character; some of them a good deal of the monthly magazine form. They are as valuable, useful, educational, as before; but they deal in a different way with many of the old subjects and they have discovered new subjects. The farm paper has changed as much as the daily paper; and one supplements the other on the farmer's desk. I think there are fewer farm papers than there were twenty years ago. I know that there are fewer poor ones; I think there are really more good ones. Some of the illustrations of change in character and form come to mind: For years I wrote for the *Country Gentleman,* then a weekly. The *Farm and Fireside* was a different paper when Herbert Quick edited it. I have a letter from Arthur H. Jenkins, editor and manager, in which he mentions the changes that had to be made in the *Farm Journal* that forty years ago had much more circulation than any other farm paper. The *Breeder's Gazette* has been made a monthly. I believe that even Alvin H. Sanders, certainly loving the old form, will say that the change was advisable, and that Samuel R. Guard and Charles R. Burlingham are making a periodical better suited to present-day requirements than the old weekly would be. I do not think that anyone will say that it was a mistake to change these and other excellent, leading farm and live stock periodicals.

The changed field of the agricultural paper, and the interest taken in things agricultural by daily papers, were brought forcibly to my attention in 1912. There was much said in print once more about my being selected for Secretary of Agriculture, but *it was nearly altogether in the daily papers.* The first of these editorials that I noted was in the Washington *Herald.* I was especially gratified by an editorial in the Chicago *Tribune* and of course for that I must thank Tiffany Blake, another of my helpful friends.

It is the daily paper that is now the closest to the live farmer. It is no reflection on the editors and publishers of farm papers that this is the case. Rather it is evidence that they are progressive, that they recognize the revolution in conditions affecting the publication of farm papers, and are wise enough to change the character of their publications. The agricultural journals of today are a high testimonial to those concerned in their production and also to the farmer, for, it must be confessed, they make a higher appeal than did the farm papers of forty or even twenty or ten years ago. The farmer is to be congratulated on the change in the agricultural journals; and as well on the consideration given him, his business, and his interests, by the town and city papers. These papers realize that farming is yet the basic industry and that the prosperity and well-being of all is affected by the prosperity and well-being of the farmer. The change in the farm paper and in the city paper regarding agriculture is to the benefit of farming and all other industries.

LIFE INSURANCE

I AM sure that my business affairs are not of much interest to others and because of that they will be dismissed with two or three more paragraphs. I was president of a life insurance company for twelve years, beginning in 1912. I was very fortunate in some of my early associates: Dr. S. C. Stanton, John M. Ashby, Miles J. Furnas, and George H. Barmore. I was in the life insurance business during a very trying period for life insurance companies. The World War almost wrecked our agency organization, for we had sought young men for agents and many of our best agents were in the service. The influenza epidemic of 1918–19 increased the deaths among our policy holders and incapacitated a part of our agency force while putting many people in the class of unacceptable risks. Then came the deflation of farming. Yet because of the able aid of those already named, and of others, among them such young men as William E. Swift and Emmett R. Byrnes, we were able to achieve such success that Hon. Thomas W. Blackburn, who certainly was as competent as anyone to judge of the management of the life insurance companies of the United States, wrote me in 1922 that what had been accomplished was "positive proof of efficient management," and was "really a phenomenal achievement"; and a year later he wrote, "you have surely made a wonderful record."

There is much human interest in the life insurance business. It is plain that the payment of eighty percent of the premiums on policies is preceded by no small self denial. The concern of so many that the premium may be paid in small installments has much back of it and is often pathetic. This is especially true when the application is from a young man or girl and names the mother or father as the beneficiary.

I was agreeably surprised in the character of life insurance agents. I had often heard it said that when a man had failed in everything else he became a life insurance agent. This is very far from the truth. It requires much more than the average ability to be a successful life insurance agent. I doubt if any other class of business men are on the average of higher character or greater ability than life insurance agents.

CHAPTER VIII

RURAL MAIL DELIVERY

IN 1879 I PROPOSE A WIDE-REACHING REFORM

IT IS almost impossible to understand the isolation and insularity, as compared with today, of even the most intelligent of farm people fifty years ago. It is not to be thought that they were more ignorant than other people. Then the knowledge of the most intelligent in town and country lacked much that is now commonplace. Bell had exhibited his telephone at the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia in 1876; but three years later no one dreamed that some day almost every farm house would have a telephone. Not one person in a hundred had yet seen a telephone. Edison invented the incandescent lamp in 1879, and the first company to attempt electric lighting on a commercial basis was organized December 17, 1880. I went to the first Southern Exposition in 1883. The marvel of that exposition was a street car propelled by electricity: it actually went around a block as described in the poem manufactured during the exposition —

No pushee, no pullee,
No horsee, no mulee,
But allee samee
Go like hellee.

Of course there were no automobiles in 1879. Not one farmer in three hundred got a daily paper. In Illinois the farmer was fortunate if he got his mail once a week. Many farmers of the United States were served by a post office to which the mail was brought only once in two weeks. Perhaps the farmer had to go ten miles to this post office to get his mail. Scarcely any farmers had a bank account. The farmer was almost as much afraid of a check as he was of a rattlesnake. Unfortunately he was not so afraid of a contract to put lightning rods on his buildings. If one had talked about such a thing as we now know as the moving picture, he would have been hustled to the insane asylum. His guard to that institution would have been doubled if he had talked of such a thing as the radio. Compared with now there was not much to know; compared with now the facilities for knowing were poor indeed; compared with now country people were at a very great disadvantage as regards the facilities for knowing.

On the other hand, people were more thoughtful than they are now. That which most of us flatter ourselves is our act of thinking is only our passing on without thought that opinion passed on by a procession of wiseacres extending back hundreds of years. The rural people of Illinois did not travel much in the seventies and eighties. Traveling was not so easy as it is now. Sleeping cars were seldom carried; the vestibuled car was not in use; the toilet facilities on trains and at stations were almost incredibly crude. Each railway system had its own time, and 10:30 o'clock of one system might be the same as 11:13 o'clock of another system, the trains of which were supposed to "connect" with the trains of the first system: the United States was not yet divided into broad bands of "eastern time," "central time," etc. The cost of railway travel was actually more than now; comparatively it was much more. Back of all, the people, especially the rural people, were not yet possessed by the urge to travel. They stayed at home more. They read more weighty books.

It was in September of 1879 that with my father I made a railway trip of twenty-two miles to the city of Quincy, and I saw that in which I had been interested for years — I saw the delivery of mail.

About two weeks after my trip to Quincy in 1879 I read a paper at the literary society that met in the nearby schoolhouse. The subject of my paper was " Delivering Mail to Farmers."

In that paper I argued for the delivery of mail to all farmers within a few years, but not to all farmers from the beginning. I cited a township my small audience knew well. In its area of six miles square there were four post offices and consequently four postmasters. Mail was brought to these post offices by a " star route " carrier only once a week. I proposed that in such a township all post offices be abolished and that the mail be distributed to every person in the township every week day! Three of the four postmasters were unpopular on account of being old and crabbed or " uppish " and unaccommodating. I felt sure that the proposition to compel them to do some real work in order to live would be popular.

Then I argued that at little cost and no net expense to the government, the man who carried a star route in more sparsely settled territory could and should leave mail in boxes along his route for all that lived along the route and for all living some distance from the route that cared to put up a box on the route. At that time the large majority of farmers got their mail through the star route system. Everyone in my audience, except one, got his mail at a post office to which the mail was brought by a star route carrier.

The carrier went past my home. He went past the home of our nearest neighbor who had put up a box and he paid the star route carrier two dollars a year to leave his mail in the box instead of carrying it two miles farther to the post office, and to which he otherwise would have to go to get his mail. You see my proposition about the star route carriers had its genesis in this mail box. But up to this time no one had been bold enough to propose that it be compulsory for the carrier to leave the mail for all who chose to put up a box along his route; and at government expense if he got any extra salary. Nor had anyone proposed the abolition of most of the small country post offices and the actual carrying of the mail, by employes of the government, to the farmers. I was sure that at no net expense to the government, certainly at only a small, justifiable expense, mail could be delivered to eighty percent of the farm population. And I saw, in my enthusiasm, the mail delivered to every farmer before twenty years, as I knew that it was delivered to every farmer in Great Britain and almost every farmer in France; and I spoke of that as the full, ultimate development of my proposal. True, our country was much larger and our population not so dense; but we were accustomed to do things over a wide territory; and if our thousands of miles of territory would make greater the expense of delivering the mail it would also make greater the reduction of expense of star routes and small post offices. Nevertheless, I was fearful that every adult in my very small audience (farm work was heavy in September) would ridicule my proposition.

HELP AND OPPOSITION

IMMEDIATELY one of my auditors, a prominent farmer, Mr. Lycurgus Finlay, was on his feet. He was of the South and of the former slave-owning class; he was educated; he was far above the average in mentality, intelligence, and moral courage; he was a progressive and vigorous man. He endorsed everything I had said. He said it was something he had never thought of; he felt sure that no one else had thought of it until it had come to me; but it was feasible and he hoped that I would send my essay or something similar to everyone of the farm papers for which I wrote; that he had some newspaper friends and that one of the Congressmen from Missouri was his personal friend, and he would write to them and send them copies of my essay if he could have copies. No one else seemed to be interested in my project. The others were plainly more interested in three recitations of doggerel; a dialogue between two little girls; and a spelling match in which all those present participated. I was disappointed. When I went home and told my mother that only Mr. Finlay was interested, she said she was not surprised.

I made copies of my essay and gave them to Mr. Finlay. I have no doubt that he sent them to his newspaper friends and that Congressman. I doubt if any of his newspaper friends published a line of my essay: Mr. Finlay never mentioned to me that they did. The Missouri Congressman was William H. Hatch, who had been elected to Congress the preceding year. Mr. Finlay was from his district and doubtless the Finlays and the Hatches were good friends. At any rate, Mr. Hatch was always my friend; and while he did not work for the delivery of mail to farmers as he did for some other farm legislation, he was in its favor from the time I took it up with him and he had such great influence in Congress that his friendly attitude was very helpful. I have never been able to learn of another Congressman who equalled Mr. Hatch in securing legislation of real benefit to the farmers. He served in the 46th, 47th, 48th, 49th, 50th, 51st, 52nd, and 53rd Congresses and he was chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture for fourteen years. He was the author of the pleuro-pneumonia law; the oleomargarine law; the law making the head of the agricultural department a Cabinet officer; and — his greatest achievement — the law establishing the State agricultural experiment stations. He was responsible for much other legislation of real, lasting benefit to farmers. He was an able, sensible, patriotic man. He was born in Scott County, Kentucky, September 11, 1833, and died on his farm near Hannibal, Missouri, December 23, 1896. His mother was Mary Reed Adams Hatch, daughter of Dr. Samuel and Abigail (Dodge) Adams. Dr. Adams was a descendant of Henry Adams who came to Braintree, Massachusetts, in 1630. The Dodge family was almost as distinguished as the Adams family, in colonial New England.

I treasure few things more than a large photograph of William H. Hatch, sent me by his widow shortly after his death, with an endorsement indicating the esteem in which

I was held by him, and accompanied by a letter saying that he had always had the very highest opinion of me and my work for farmers, and had wished that I have the photograph.

I had a vision of the mail carrier coming to the door of every farm house every week day, although I was well aware from the beginning that my objective must be reached by stages. Such a Rome could not be built in a day. And my reading of history had shown me the truth expressed by Mussolini to Miss Ida Tarbell: "Good things must come slowly."

I sent a carefully prepared article on the government delivery of mail to farmers to every farm paper for which I wrote.

Never did a young enthusiast have a more cruel awakening. Not one of the articles was published. Two editors returned my MS without a word; one wrote that the whole thing was absurd and to forget it; another, M. J. Lawrence of the *Ohio Farmer,* the paper of which I was an associate editor, wrote a sarcastic letter showing that he did not grasp the proposition at all; and the others did not condescend to write a word or to return my MS.

My fighting blood was aroused — my mother was French, my father Swiss and Irish. I thought a great deal about my proposition: one can think well while he harrows the ground for wheat, or puts the corn in shocks. In my mind the delivery of mail to farmers took complete, definite shape. Before a year I had formulated government delivery of mail to farmers substantially as it was thirty years later. But always I knew that it could not burst out as a useful lady once did from the head of Zeus; I knew that the public must be educated to demand it before Congress would act; and I knew that the public would not approve any project of delivering from the beginning mail to eighty per cent, much less one hundred per cent, of the farmers.

I was naturally diffident. My timidity was my good fortune. If I had possessed the assertiveness and assurance of some I have seen try to get legislation, I should have been much longer in gaining a friendly audience. As a matter of fact, some years later, when I had obtained a wide audience and Congress was seriously thinking about the delivery of mail to farmers, the whole thing was nearly wrecked by the enthusiasts who demanded that if there were any extension of the free delivery service at all it must be made to reach to the home of every villager and every farmer. Always I have found the extremist the greatest obstacle in the way of desirable legislation.

BEGINNING TO GET A HEARING

No other writer for farm papers had such an audience as I had. In fact, no one else had such a farm audience. In time I got courage to slip in a sentence in favor of the government delivering mail to farmers in my articles for farm papers. More and more these were allowed to get into the paper. Doubtless the editors heard from their subscribers; and then doubtless also they had come to smile when they saw what I had slipped in and allowed it to go in the paper — it was only Stahl's silly notion, his foolish craze. "Well, let it go in. Stahl is really too popular a writer to offend him. He is sensible about everything else. Let him rave."

Before the farm papers would freely admit my stuff on my "craze," I was permitted to use the columns of the city papers. This has been my experience always: the city papers are more ready than the farm papers to aid in getting something of substantial, permanent benefit to farmers. The first dailies to admit my stuff were those of the smaller cities. I think likely the first of all was the Burlington *Hawkeye,* for which I wrote a good deal on other topics. Among the early daily paper friends were the *News,* the *Herald* and the *Tribune* of Chicago. I will always be grateful to them. The *Tribune* gave me more help than any other paper in the campaign for a modern parcel post; but the *News* and the *Herald* gave me the most help of all in the campaign for the delivery of mail to farmers, although the *Tribune* never refused publication of anything I sent it. A few days after I had sent my first letter, which was a long one, to the *Tribune,* I received a note from Joseph Medill, the editor-in-chief, suggesting that I see him about my letter when next I came to Chicago. I saw to it that " business " took me to Chicago within a week. I regarded Mr. Medill almost with awe. I knew that he had been the consistent friend of Lincoln; that he had played an important part in the nomination of Lincoln for President. I knew that he had made a great newspaper of the *Tribune.* I could not remember when I was not familiar with the *Tribune.* When I met him I was disappointed. He did not look as I thought he should look. He was the most unassuming of men. His dress was plain. But I soon saw him differently. He talked with me for a full half hour. He talked about the farmer, the business of farming, and my " craze." But he did not call it a craze. I have never met another man who could quite equal him in framing terse questions that should elicit comprehensive information in comparatively few words. Nearly half his questions I could answer Yes or No; and the questions were so clear, succinct, and comprehensive that they covered much ground and went deep. Abruptly he said: " Your letter will be in tomorrow's *Tribune.*" I thanked him and withdrew. I had intended to return home that night, but I wanted mightily to see that letter in the *Tribune.* I went to the popular Commercial Hotel, American plan, two dollars a day. I was not so agitated the next morning as was Henry W. Grady when his first piece might be, and might not be, in the New York *Herald.* I could sit up, after I had procured, about 5:30 A.M., a copy of the *Tribune.* It contained my letter. My recollection is distinct that the letter occupied a column and a quarter. When Joseph Medill died, among those who sincerely sorrowed was a farmer who had met him only once, and they had talked together about the unsentimental subjects of the farmer, farming, and the delivery of mail to farmers.

But it was not by my pen that I gained my first audience. Long before any considerable number of my articles favoring mail delivery to farmers was published, I was permitted to talk my hobby at a rapidly growing number of meetings. By 1881 I was actually asked to go on the programs of meetings to talk about it! The years 1880 to 1895 were a period of much public speaking. The lyceum lecturer was abroad in the land — all the way from Bob Ingersoll to T. DeWitt Talmadge and Dr. Joseph Cook. There was a keen demand for public speakers, especially for gatherings of rural people. I talked upon rural free delivery to many thousands in groves; in armories; in hay sheds; in Grange halls; in schoolhouses; more than once in a church. I talked to farmers, villagers, town people, city people.

Before long I was getting many letters commending my proposition. I have no doubt that editors got letters in favor of my proposal. With tongue and pen I kept at it. I was often discouraged. Once I met Jacob Groves, who had carried me to school. He told me to keep on; that the farmer did "not holler his head off about things," but he thought about them just the same; that I had made twenty times as many converts as I thought I had. This came at a time when it was sorely needed. And my mother never doubted my final triumph. I think that must be the way of all mothers.

CHAPTER IX

METHODS AND OPPOSITION

THE CONDITION OF FARMERS

I HAVE written of the intelligence of the farmers and of other people in 1879 as compared with today. I am sure that no one not at least ten years of age in the early eighties can ever comprehend the condition of the farmers at that time. Their poverty of the seventies and early eighties was so far below their financial condition now that it can not be measured, and can be understood by only those who endured it.

The panic of 1873 was a very severe panic. For years industry and business suffered. The prices of farm products were very low. In the South, and west of Pennsylvania, almost every farmer was in debt; on many farms there was a mortgage. Interest rates were high. Taxes were high. It was truly a fierce struggle to meet the interest payments and pay the taxes. Many failed, although life was so bare and scant that the farmers just lived. The farmer had little respect for himself; and his respect for the farmer was all the respect the farmer got. Other classes looked down — most of them looked far down — on the farmer. A farmer did not think of writing to a Congressman or even a member of the legislature to ask for anything. Farmers had not any conception of their power as voters. The Grange had made a loud pretense of voicing the wishes, requests, and demands of the farmers about legislation: and much credit is due the Grange. But the Grange had been a failure much more than a success. Unfortunately it had demanded foolish things; things that even Congress was wise enough to know would be hurtful. Yet more, it did not respectfully ask; it demanded, and in an offensive way. Already the Grange was in disrepute among the large majority of farmers and among legislators.

WRITING TO CONGRESSMEN

WHEN I was in the high school in the winter of 1880–81 I earned some money in various ways and once I was sent on a business errand to the residence of James W. Singleton, then Congressman from the district in which Quincy was located.

Born in Virginia in 1811, he had come to Illinois when scarcely twenty years of age. He had settled in Quincy in 1852. He had practised medicine: no state license was then required. He had read law and was a practising lawyer. His home, that of a Southern gentleman in the North, was a famous stock farm and widely known as Boscobel Farm. He was a scientific farmer. He had been a member of the State constitutional conventions of 1847 and 1860–61. Because the governor had put him in charge of a military force during the Mormon trouble at Nauvoo, he was called "General." He was a railroad promoter and builder. He served three terms in the state legislature and he served three terms in Congress: the 46th and 47th Congresses — 1879–83; and the 49th Congress — 1885–87. He was most noted because he had visited Richmond four times during the winter of 1860–61 and the spring of 1861, in an effort to avert the Civil War. He claimed that he had done this on the request of Lincoln. This claim was doubted. He was a very active, notorious member of the "Peace Party." He was what was called a "Copperhead." There were many such in that part of Illinois during the War and after, but there were also Union people, and as he was bitterly opposed to the war, and said so emphatically and frequently, he had been the subject of violent abuse. Apparently he was indifferent to this abuse. He never compromised on his opinions. Seemingly he held his many foes in contempt.

I found General Singleton seated with a friend in front of the big fireplace at the end of the wide hall that ran through the middle of the mansion. I had never seen him before and I was much disappointed. He was in appearance far from the Virginia gentleman and Southern Colonel of the books. He was scarcely the average height. He was slouchy in physique and dress. He lacked the long moustache and imperial I had expected! He had a ragged, yet short, beard, and an insignificant moustache! But his eyes were very keen. It was plain that he was not pleased by my intrusion. He told me to be seated and then ignored me for half an hour.

But the time was not lost to me; anyhow, my time was not worth much. I could not avoid hearing what he said; and in the sight of General Singleton and his friend I was so insignificant that it was a matter of indifference to them if I did hear. I soon learned that General Singleton had received nearly a score of letters from farmers condemning his vote on a measure before Congress that winter. He was very much perturbed. He said several times to his friend, " When a farmer is stirred up to write a letter it means business." It was plain from what he said that he was not greatly concerned about letters from lawyers, doctors, merchants, or preachers; but he attached much importance to letters from farmers — " these men, sir, aren't letter-writers; they don't write until they are deeply moved and it shows what many farmers may think."

I had made a great discovery; I, who wished so much to awaken public interest in the delivery of mail to farmers. Here was an old politician accustomed to the most violent criticism; supposed to be indifferent to abuse; rich and powerful, but moved by about twenty letters from the despised farmers! And what he had done was proof that he knew what was important. Notwithstanding his damning record he had elected himself to Congress. And he feared these farmers!

From that time on, in season and out of season, I urged farmers to write to their Congressmen and ask for what they wanted; not to refrain from doing this because they could not write prettily and might not be able to spell correctly. I emphasized what a task it was for a farmer to write a letter with fingers unused to the pen and stiffened by the plow handle and pitchfork; but, I argued, the Congressmen knew this and because of it the letter from a farmer would have all the greater effect. I made much of this in my articles and letters for the papers and especially in my speeches.

Because I believed in the power of letters I did not use money to appear before committees of Congress. I might say that I never advocated form letters or sent out a letter for farmers to copy. Such letters have little effect. The letter that counts is the honest-to-goodness letter plainly from the heart of the voter and in his own language. A great many such letters can be got to Congressmen for the cost of appearing before a committee in Washington. The legislation I have been interested in would have been advanced if there had never been a committee hearing on it. Such a hearing stirs up opposition and oftener does more harm than good. A hearing before a committee is the Congressman's favorite way of delaying action when he does not want to go on record. As soon as I got well into the work for mail delivery to farmers I made the best study I could of the course of bills before Congress. I was puzzled that notable bills, much discussed in speeches and the papers, in some way got lost and never emerged as laws; while other bills, that were not important or well understood, or were important to few at the cost of the many, were made into laws. Before I made my first trip to Washington I saw plainly that the bills on which there were committee hearings fared not so well as many others. I saw more clearly every time I went to Washington that four times out of five a committee hearing only keeps busy the advocates of a bill;

is designed to placate and mislead them by false hopes until the bill can be lost or until the session will adjourn. I became convinced that it was direct expressions of public opinion to the Congressman, and quiet conversation with him, that made bills into laws.

Hence I never appeared before a committee to favor the delivery of mail to farmers. I have appeared before only two Congressional committees. I appeared before the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads at the parcel post hearing. I doubt if that hearing helped us any. I think that I did reasonably well under the circumstances, for six or seven members of the committee badgered me as much as they could, two or more asking questions at the same time in an effort to confuse me, and all the members of the committee except Weeks and Lloyd apparently unfriendly, critical, belligerent. Ninety per cent of the members of Congress consider themselves very clever and able and astute. Nothing else gives them so much enjoyment as bullyragging a farmer or college professor or some other ordinary person who may venture into their pompous presence, when in committee assembled, to present facts in favor of some measure for the public good. When I appeared before the House Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, I was not allowed to present clearly and succinctly my arguments, which I had carefully prepared. Within the first five minutes that I was before the committee, I was told by six different members that they did not want my facts and arguments! I was told this in a very arrogant, rough way. The published report of the hearing would give the reader of it the notion that it was almost an orderly, my-dear-fellow affair. This was not the fault of the shorthand reporters. Reports and speeches are well edited before they are printed. Often this is necessary to the Congressmen.

I have never regretted that I did not waste time and my limited funds to appear before Congressional committees. I knew that time and money were much better spent in getting right-from-the-heart letters to Congressmen from farmers. But it did most officers of farmers' organizations a great deal of good to see their names in print as having appeared before a committee of Congress.

I talked rural mail delivery to farmers, and often city organizations, from Colorado City to Boston, from Fort Worth to St. Paul. No one gave me a dollar at any time to aid in any way in my work. I never asked for a cent. Some years I gave to my hobby more than one-third of my time also. I met with more and more encouragement. I shall never forget the day when I was told that my stuff would be used by the firms that furnished the "patent insides" or "boiler plate" to thousands of local papers. In those days nearly every local paper had half of its pages furnished to it ready printed without cost or at very little cost. This was a great advantage, for the printed pages were good — telegraphic news from all parts of the world, good short and continued stories, poems, essays, markets, etc. There were three corporations each of which furnished this "patent inside." The aggregate circulation ran into the millions. When I got my articles into all these "patent insides" I reached nearly every farmer and also nearly every family in the towns and villages. Then Congressmen began to hear from the farmers in an impressive way.

The daily papers of the large cities began to allow me more and more space in their columns — once the Chicago *News* gave me two full columns on the editorial page, and one day I got a letter from the editor of the *North American Review* saying that he would use my article on the free delivery of mail to farmers. No other periodical was so weighty in those days. That was a great victory.

I knew that the battle was won. After all, the compelling force in this country is public opinion.

Of course years of hard work and real battling were yet before the advocates of mail delivery to farmers before the system was put in effect throughout the country. The enemies of this great advance in postal service died hard.

SMALL POSTMASTERS AND STAR ROUTE CONTRACTORS

THE people who made the most trouble were the little postmasters. There were tens of thousands of them. Free rural delivery would abolish their offices. We advocates of the free delivery said that the saving by abolishing these little post offices would help much in meeting the expense of farmer mail delivery. The pay of the little postmaster was not little to him. He was generally of the class to whom an annual income of a hundred dollars meant much. Then by many it was regarded as a real honor to be a fourth-class postmaster. These little postmasters were appointed in each congressional district on the recommendation of the Congressman, if he belonged to the same political party as the administration. If not, and either Senator from the state in which the congressional district was located was of the same political faith as the administration, he was allowed to select the fourth-class postmasters in that district. There was a complete change of postmasters whenever there was a change of the political complexion of the national administration; generally in a Congressional district every time there was a change in Congressmen. The Congressmen used these little post offices to pay political debts. They were the most effective means of getting votes. We had to break down the opposition of some fifty thousand postmasters scattered over the country and all of them good political workers and therefore willing talkers. It will be seen that we had to overcome the indisposition of the Congressmen to abolish a good part of their political machinery. If a Congressman favored farmer mail delivery he would make an enemy of every small postmaster in his district, of every one who hoped to be a small postmaster at some time, and of every other political worker who believed that " to the victors belong the spoils." He incurred the enmity of everyone that believed that when there was a change of administration the first thing to do was to " turn the rascals out." In truth, those Congressmen first to favor farmer mail delivery were conscientious, courageous men.

The most bitter opposition came from the star route contractors. Probably in all the history of this country there have not been ten other examples of dishonesty among public officials as flagrant as that which culminated in the "star route scandal." There were thousands of these star routes — the mail was carried miles from the railway station to some post office or there might be several post offices on the route. The making of the contracts to carry these star routes was in the hands of the Second Assistant Postmaster-General. Second Assistant Postmaster-General Brady made the ruling that a man could take star route contracts at, say $5000 each, and after the contracts were duly made, Brady could — and did — allow extra compensation to make the pay per contract $10,000 or even $15,000 more! The contractor made contracts with carriers for each route named in his contract. As some evidence of the profits in these contracts, in a speech in the House March 4, 1902, Landis of Indiana said that one star route carrier in his district was an old soldier who was paid $90 a year and the contractor was paid $400; profit to the contractor, $310. This was a modest profit — some made much more. The "graft" ran up into the millions. Of course the contractors did not get all of it — they had to divide with officials in the Post Office Department, with Congressmen, and others. All who participated in this graft fought the farmer mail delivery proposition to the last ditch, for it would abolish nearly all of the star routes.

In February 1893, when the first appropriation to test mail delivery to farmers was made, the Postmaster-General reported that there was a total of 67,884 postmasters; that in the Star and Steamboat Service there were 329 professional contractors, 3230 local contractors, and 18,505 subcontractors and carriers. These numbers meant much more at that time than they would mean now. In 1892 the annual revenues of the Post Office Department were $70,869,870 and the expenditures were $76,373,664. Both receipts and expenditures had been increasing; the expenditures to an amount that occasioned alarm and recriminations. The first year in which the expenditure of the Post Office Department went above $50,000,000 was 1886 — $50,851,452. The receipts were $43,948,422. And the Postmaster-General estimated that my "farmer mail delivery craze" would cost the national government $135,000,000!

OTHER SOURCES OF OPPOSITION

Our opponents said much about the alleged opposition of the people of the towns and small cities and villages, for in Congress it was not seriously proposed to give free delivery to towns having less than five thousand population or gross annual postal receipts of less than $5000 although by 1892 the figures sometimes named were $3000. This opposition would have been hard to overcome if it had existed as claimed. While it never existed to any extent, it was effectively used with a good many Congressmen, who knew that the small town resident could argue that it was unjust to make him go to the office for his mail when it was carried to a farmer miles from the office. This argument was so well used that it was proposed to give the towns and villages free mail delivery first, before it was given to the farmers; and, as will appear later, money was appropriated year after year, beginning in 1890, to test the feasibility of free mail delivery "in towns and villages." This was a hobby of Postmaster-General Wanamaker. It was unfortunate that some farm organizations were led to advocate this delivery in towns and villages. Fortunately the small town and village people really did not care for mail delivery. They preferred to go to the office for their mail. They had to go down town for something else, probably; it was not a hard trip; and in the office and on the way they could meet and gossip with friends.

A good deal of positive opposition came from the farmers themselves. They, too, preferred to go after the mail. It was an excuse to take a short vacation from work in the field; an opportunity to visit the neighbors. This made a strong appeal, for at that time farm life was isolated and lonely.

There was positive opposition in the Post Office Department. I do not think that Postmaster-General Wanamaker favored the free delivery of mail to farmers; he had in mind only the free delivery of mail in towns and villages. He thought that if the mail ever was delivered to all farmers it would not come to pass for many years. But he was so far superior to the postmasters-general of both the Cleveland administrations that there can be no fair comparison.

The experiments of Postmaster-General Wanamaker, which he confined to towns and villages, accomplished nothing except to give hostile or timid Congressmen a reason for not authorizing any effective action.

Of course it would have been bad policy to criticize the Postmaster-General, and I was careful not to oppose the Wanamaker proposition. It was not free delivery of mail to farmers, and it was being shrewdly used to throw dust in the eyes of those that really wished to aid the farmer. That is a favorite trick to kill legislation; enact something that looks like that which is wanted, or can be made to look enough like that which is wanted, to fool some of the friends of the desired legislation. But certainly nothing could be gained by idly getting the ill will of the Harrison administration. The President has a great influence on legislation in more ways than one. Wanamaker was known as an honest, able, patriotic man, and he had many friends. If the friends of real rural mail delivery antagonized him we would have against us not only the Postmaster-General, but thousands of his friends among the people; and it was certain we must have the friendship and good will of every one of the people possible.

CONTINUED OPPOSITION OF POSTMASTERS-GENERAL

THE positive opposition of Cleveland's Postmasters-General hurt, but did not so much delay the desired result. John Sharp Williams, of Mississippi, in a speech on the Post Office Appropriation Bill in the House March 4, 1902, said that when he ran for Congress in 1892 (the 53rd Congress, which met in December 1893) one plank of his platform was for (real) rural mail delivery; and his opponent was a Populist with the sub-treasury as one of his planks. Mr. Williams said: "After I came to Washington there was an appropriation. It was not secured by me, although the first rough draft of the resolution was drawn by me, and I voted for it, to try the experiment." (This was a year after the Watson resolution to try out free delivery *outside of* towns and villages was adopted — of this see later.) "Under Mr. Cleveland's administration, in the beginning of his second term, the Postmaster-General, Mr. Bissell, and the President were very much opposed to trying the experiment, so much so that they did not try it. It was subsequently made mandatory, and even then it was not tried. When Mr. Wilson was made Postmaster-General, one day at the Post Office Department — he having sent for me — he said he wanted to talk to me about this 'free delivery craze' as it was called. He said the President thought it was merely a scheme to 'farm the farmer.'"

As Williams said, President Cleveland and the two Postmasters-General of his second term, Bissell and Wilson, were opposed to rural mail delivery, so much so that the Postmasters-General would not expend a small annual appropriation of $10,000 to test free delivery to farmers, even when Congress said emphatically that they should. Of this later.

The Postmasters-General of Cleveland's first administration were William F. Vilas and Don M. Dickinson. Both Vilas and Dickinson thought the proposal to deliver mail to farmers at government expense was so silly and preposterous that it hurt them even to refer to it. Vilas, born in Vermont, became a prominent politician in Wisconsin. John Wanamaker was Postmaster-General through all of the Harrison administration — March 5, 1889 to March 5, 1893. The first Postmaster-General of Cleveland's second administration was Wilson S. Bissell. He had no qualifications for the place. He had been Cleveland's law partner for years and was "an able railroad lawyer." He was succeeded in 1895 by William L. Wilson, who served until March 5, 1897. He is the Wilson whom John Sharp Williams tried to enlighten. As regards the attitude of President Cleveland at this time, in his annual message to Congress on December 3, 1894, he said: "The estimated cost of rural free delivery generally is so very large that it ought not be considered in the present condition of affairs."

The first Postmaster-General who favored the free delivery of mail to farmers was James A. Gary, of Maryland, who served from March 5, 1897 to April 21, 1898. He was succeeded by Charles Emory Smith of Philadelphia, who was also a friend of the free delivery of mail to farmers. Both were able, patriotic men, in sympathy with the masses and with American institutions and traditions. They should be remembered gratefully by farmers — and are not. It was Postmaster-General Gary who said in a report made January 5, 1898, to Hon. E. F. Loud, Chairman of the House Committee on Post Office and Post Roads: "Rural free delivery dates from 1830 in France. Since 1888, the year of the Queen's Jubilee, the postal service of Great Britain has accommodated every household in the British Kingdom. Germany, Austria, Belgium and Switzerland have rural free mail delivery."

That was a statement, in almost my words, of what I had told him ten days before. For years it had been one of my arguments.

THE FARMERS' ALLIANCE

DURING the period that I worked for the delivery of mail to farmers there were only three national organizations of farmers that could be expected to exert any influence on Congress.

The Farmers' National Congress gave me the aid I desired. The National Farmers' Alliance and Industrial Union was a confederation of the Farmers' Alliance, the Farmers' Union, the National Agricultural Wheel, and the Knights of Labor. This confederation was not completed until 1889, and the first formal platform of the Alliance, as it was commonly called, was adopted at Ocala, Florida, in December 1890. Two important planks read:

> We demand the abolition of national banks, and the substitution of legal-tender Treasury notes in lieu of national bank notes, issued in sufficient volume to do the business of the country on a cash system, regulating the amount needed on a per capita basis as the business interests of the country expand; and that all money issued by the Government shall be legal tender in payment of all debts, both public and private.
>
> We demand the free and unlimited coinage of silver.

Further, the Alliance demanded that the national government control all the means of transportation and communication. Its outstanding "plank" was the "sub-treasury plan." This called for the erection in any county of the United States that complied with certain conditions, of warehouses in which could be stored certain farm products. I quote from the bill providing for the "sub-treasury plan" introduced into Congress:

> Any owner of cotton, wheat, corn, oats or tobacco may deposit the same in the sub-treasury nearest the point of its production, and receive therefor treasury notes, hereinafter provided for, equal at the date of deposit to 80 per cent. of the net value of such products at the market price, said price to be determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, under rules and regulations prescribed, based upon the price current in the leading cotton, tobacco or grain markets of the United States; but no deposit consisting in whole or in part of cotton, tobacco or grain imported into this country shall be received under the provisions of this act.
>
> The Secretary of the Treasury shall cause to be prepared treasury notes, in such amounts as may be required for the purpose of the

above section, and in such form and denominations as he may prescribe, provided that no note shall be of a denomination less than $1 or more than $1,000.

The treasury notes issued under this Act, shall be receivable for customs, and shall be a full legal tender for all debts, both public and private, and such notes when held by any national banking association shall be counted as part of the lawful reserve. . . .

THE GRANGE

The Grange has benefited all farmers, and of course much the most its members, by developing their self-respect, their self-reliance, their sense of their importance; and, of great significance, at the same time it has taught them to read, to think, to discuss, to investigate, to listen and to talk. The great achievement of the Grange has been to develop the farmer and all his family. It was the first farmer organization to admit women on an equality with men and to give them offices of importance. And remember that it did that from its beginning in the sixties.

Always the members of the Grange have been above the average. Many of the leaders of the Grange have been men of great ability.

During the first quarter century of its history the Grange felt no concern whatever regarding the postal service. It was during these twenty-five years that it had its greatest membership — the paid membership in 1874 was 268,368; in 1875, 858,050; in 1876, 728,313; in 1877, 411,244; in 1880, 124,420; and in 1889, 106,782. By 1880 it was in general disrepute and had been discredited by the unwise handling of its own finances and affairs; by the failure of the "Grange stores" and Grange manufacturing enterprises; and also by its advocacy of inexpedient measures.

At the annual meeting in November 1888, when the Grange was at its lowest point, J. H. Brigham, of Ohio, was elected Master of the National Grange. He was a wise, patriotic, aggressive man. After Brigham's election the

Grange steadily increased in influence. The Grange might have been expected to champion the cause of rural free mail delivery, but it came tardily to the support of this proposal, and then with little enthusiasm. I have told how my own activity in its behalf went back to 1879. In 1891 (and again in 1892) Mortimer Whitehead, Lecturer of the National Grange, in a long statement, widely circulated, told of what the Grange had stood for and accomplished. Its consistent advocacy since 1877 of free silver was emphasized. But it failed even to mention rural free mail delivery. Yet the Grange had not feared to advocate certain very radical measures, and when I had an interveiw with Postmaster-General Wanamaker shortly after Whitehead's statement had been circulated, he was most caustic about the Grange's position on free silver, the two per cent loan, and other matters. I saw that it would be a disadvantage rather than an advantage, to have the Grange champion the delivery of mail to farmers.

Unfortunately the Grange and other farmers' organizations got into a bitter fight in 1893 with the Cleveland administration on account of a speech made by the Secretary of Agriculture, J. Sterling Morton.

According to the Grange Historian, Atkeson, " one subject had more thought and consideration " at the annual meeting of the National Grange at Syracuse, N. Y., in November 1893, than *all others combined;* that subject was J. Sterling Morton. Atkeson says that the Worthy Master " turned his batteries on the Secretary of Agriculture "; that " just then there was not a question of such vital importance as an address delivered by J. Sterling Morton, Secretary of Agriculture "; that " the Worthy Master seemed to be overflowing with sarcasm at the thought of the speech "; and that " the Worthy Master applied the most opprobrious language to the railroad attorney and lobbyist, who is the Secretary of Agriculture." The greater part of the proceedings of the meeting was devoted to abuse of Secretary Morton. The National Grange unanimously adopted long and violent resolutions, prepared after much labor by a special committee, in which it was stated that "so far as the Grange is concerned, there is not one word of truth in what the Secretary of Agriculture has said about it"; declaring that Morton had "proven himself unworthy of the high position which he holds"; demanding the removal of Morton and the appointment of a man acceptable to the Grange; and so on.

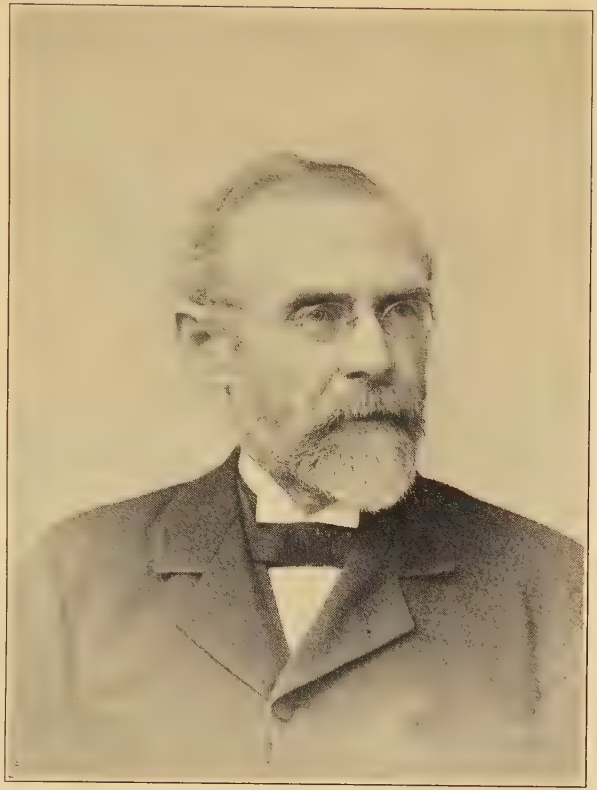
Other farm organizations took similar action. It will be seen that an indorsement of the Grange and these other farm organizations would not be a recommendation to the Cleveland administration or to those members of Congress friendly to that administration. The National Grange first heard of rural free mail delivery at its annual meeting in Springfield, Ohio, in 1891. Speaking of the Postal Telegraph and "the free delivery of mail matter to rural neighborhoods," Worthy Master J. H. Brigham said: "Much can be urged in support of both of these propositions, and I commend them to your consideration." This was all — two lines (title excluded) out of 455 — scant attention indeed. At the same time the Grange positively hurt our cause by commending Postmaster-General Wanamaker's extension of free mail delivery to towns and villages. It looked as if the farmers, like many others, wanted the towns served first, and would be satisfied if the farm districts waited indefinitely in the meanwhile.

However, in 1894, when Worthy Master Brigham wrote me he would oppose free silver in his annual address, and the attitude of the Grange had so changed that I was invited to address the National Grange on mail delivery to farmers at its annual meeting in Springfield, Illinois, in November 1894, I was glad to accept the invitation.

It is to be borne in mind that both President Cleveland and President Harrison, whose terms extended from March 4, 1885 to March 4, 1897, were very pronounced indeed in their opposition to free silver and also to the subtreasury plan of the Alliance and the two percent loans on farms demands of the Grange. Of course the members of their Cabinets, including the Postmasters-General, and the Presidents' adherents in Congress, who could control legislation, were also opposed to these things. And all these public men combined had a tremendous influence on public opinion.

At the meeting of the National Grange in 1894, I was introduced by Worthy Master Brigham, who that day courageously came out *against* free silver. He recommended rural free mail delivery of the right sort — to farmers. I was a meager five feet, four inches in comparison to his six feet, two and a half inches of well proportioned, courtly dignity. However, the Grange listened to a full exposition by me of the advantages of the project I was supporting, and several times I was applauded. More than that, I was given a vote of thanks and the Grange for the first time in its history indorsed the real rural mail delivery: delivery to farmers.

Meanwhile, other organizations and individuals had been quicker and more enthusiastic. Let me mention two: The Farmers' National Congress — of which I shall say more later on — adopted a resolution in favor of delivery of mail to farmers in 1889. At each annual meeting it adopted another such resolution as long as action was needed. And I like to think of the *Farm Journal,* a paper which Postmaster-General Wanamaker's report to Congress had quoted in opposition to rural free mail delivery. It was owned and edited by Mr. Wilmer Atkinson, who had won the confidence of its 500,000 subscribers, and the affection of many. But Mr. Atkinson got most of his subscribers through the third- and fourth-class postmasters, who eked out their meagre salaries by acting as subscription agents. Naturally, Mr. Atkinson, as an honest, loyal man, stood firmly against a proposal which would have struck at the incomes of his subscription-agents. So while he invited my contributions to his paper, he would not let me further in his columns my proposal to put his friends out of office.



WILMER ATKINSON

Founder and for years publisher and editor of *The Farm Journal*

Hon. WILLIAM S. BENNET

who, when Congressman from New York, introduced the first bill for a parcel post on rural routes

Nevertheless, I sent in my best arguments for free delivery of mail to farmers, being sure that he would read them. He did, and finally was won over. And my strongest arguments in favor of real rural delivery henceforth appeared regularly as *editorials* in the *Farm Journal.*

CHAPTER X

RURAL MAIL DELIVERY AND CONGRESS

MR. BINGHAM INTRODUCES A JOINT RESOLUTION

ON AUGUST 29, 1890, Henry H. Bingham offered in the Congress of the United States a joint resolution "to allow the Postmaster-General to expend $10,000 to test at small towns and villages the system of free delivery service, and for other purposes."

Mr. Bingham was a member of Congress from the First Pennsylvania District from the 46th to the 62nd Congress, both inclusive. He established a record for continuous service in the House. He was Postmaster of Philadelphia 1867 to 1872 and took especial interest in postal matters throughout his long service in Congress. Always he had, not the rural, but the urban viewpoint.

Congress in session in 1890 spent much time in debating the bill to extend the free delivery system to all cities having a population of not less than 3000 or gross postal revenue of not less than $3000. This was opposed by Senator Cockrell, who voiced the fear of the majority of the Senators and of Congressmen as well that any extension of the free delivery among the towns and cities would give greater courage and aggressiveness to the advocates of mail delivery to the farmers.

The Bingham resolution was adopted by the House September 30, 1890, and by the Senate on the same day.

Before the resolution was adopted in the House there was a very long debate of the most trivial character, as is often Congressional debate. The principal participants were

Cannon, of Illinois, and Holman, of Indiana. Holman served in the House 1859–65; 1867–77; 1881–95, and was elected to the 55th Congress (1897–99). He died April 22, 1897. He was for free silver and a heavy income tax. He was loyal to "the district which I have the honor to represent." In those days that district, in southwestern Indiana, was, by reason of its non-progressive disposition, somewhat of a joke. Years ago it lost completely its old character. Holman was known as the "great objector." He was also known as "the watch dog of the Treasury." He was the fighting foe of all graft and extravagance. Vice President Hendricks estimated that he saved the people of the United States all of $25,000,000.

I was in Washington and watched the debate in the House September 30. I did not know whether to be pleased or displeased by the passage of the Bingham resolution. It did not provide for the delivery of mail to farmers.

Three hours after the House received from the Senate the message stating that it had adopted the Bingham resolution, Congress adjourned.

It was an able Senate that sent this message. John J. Ingalls, of Kansas, was president *pro tem.* Other members were Aldrich of Rhode Island, Edmunds of Vermont, Cockrell of Missouri, and Hoar of Massachusetts.

The appropriation made by the Bingham resolution was used by the Postmaster-General as were other appropriations for the some purpose. It was proved that free delivery so far increased the receipts of the post office in small towns that it was really profitable to the Government; but the people of the small towns did not wish mail delivery and the matter was dropped.

AN APPROPRIATION TO DELIVER MAIL TO FARMERS

THE STORY of the first appropriation to try out real rural mail delivery — delivery in rural communities "other than towns and villages" — is told at great length in that lively and interesting publication, the *Congressional Record.* At that time the House had this rule:

> No appropriation shall be reported in any general appropriation bill, or be in order as an amendment thereto, for any expenditure not previously authorized by law, unless in continuation of appropriations for such public works and objects as are already in progress. Nor shall any provision in any such bill or amendment thereto changing existing laws be in order, except such as being germane to the subject matter of the bill, shall retrench expenditures by the reduction of the number and salary of the officers of the United States, by the reduction of the compensation of any persons paid out of the Treasury of the United States, or by the reduction of the amounts of money covered by the bill. Provided, that it shall be in order further to amend such bill upon the report of the committee having jurisdiction of the subject matter of such amendment, which amendment, being germane to the subject matter of the bill, shall retrench expenditures.

The Senate had a similar rule.

These rules were adopted to protect the House and the Senate each against itself and the country from both.

They cut some figure in the proceedings that resulted in an appropriation to try out real rural mail delivery. They were in effect February 17, 1893.

That date was an important one to me. I had gone to Washington to consult with the friends of farmer mail delivery. The Harrison administration would end in fifteen days. Cleveland, the President-elect, was, of course, well known. He had not shown any sympathy with farmers during his first administration. While I did not consider Wanamaker a friend of real rural mail delivery, I feared that the farmers had lost by the election the preceding November. However, there was this to be considered: Cleveland was a Democrat. The Democratic party was dominated by the Southerners. It was among the Southerners that there was the most pronounced sentiment in favor of the delivery of mail to farmers, and I had my warmest friends in the South. I knew that Thomas E. Watson, a Congressman from Georgia, was heartily in favor of the rural mail delivery that I advocated. I knew this from correspondence with the good friends I had made in Georgia, rather than by correspondence direct with Watson. He was serving his first, and, as it turned out, his last term in the House. I reached Washington February 14. I had a conference with Watson and others the next day. I was convinced that he was the best man to present to the House the proposition to appropriate a small amount to test out delivery of mail among farmers as Wanamaker had tested it in small towns and villages. Other members of Congress and other friends of rural mail delivery also believed that he was the best man to attempt to secure this appropriation. He was neither Republican nor Democrat — he was a Populist — and the Republicans were disposed to oppose that favored by the Democrats, and vice versa. He consented to make the attempt. On account of the House rule already given, the attempt took the form of an amendment really reducing the appropriation for the Post Office Department by $43, and specifying that of the amount appropriated the sum of $10,000 should be used by the Postmaster-General in experimental free delivery among farmers. The bill to appropriate money for the Post Office Department was before the House and it was thought all but certain that the proper time for Watson to present his amendment would come on the 17th. I was in the visitors' gallery, and I fear that my pulse was hitting close to the hundred mark. I doubt if I was ever more intent in my life than I was when Watson sent to the clerk's desk his amendment and asked that it be read. I can never forget my feelings while I watched the proceedings of the House. I am sure that I did not take one full breath until the desired result had been achieved by the friends of rural mail delivery of the right brand. Please remember that I had been working for this for thirteen years.

When the Post Office appropriation bill was called up for consideration in the House, Watson moved that the amount carried should be reduced from $11,254,943, to $11,254,-

900, and that of this sum $10,000 should "be applied under the direction of the Postmaster-General to experimental free delivery in rural communities other than towns and villages."

The Watson amendment was debated thoroughly. It was attempted to make points of order against it. Of course Holman objected. So did Loud, of California, who consistently opposed delivery of mail to farmers. The bill was in charge of Henderson, of North Carolina, chairman of the House Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads. He favored the amendment.

After debate the amendment was accepted and the bill passed as amended.

The amendment escaped debate in the Senate. Shelby M. Cullom, of Illinois, was chairman of the Senate Committee on the Post Office and he was favorable to delivery of mail to farmers.

The Senate and the House did not agree on all clauses of the bill and it went to conference, but when it was finally passed by both Houses and was signed by the President of the United States, it had in it the exact words of the Watson amendment.

This bill was known as H. R. 10,349, making appropriations for the Post Office Department for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1894.

After the adoption of the Watson amendment by the House I remained in the Capitol building until the House adjourned, hoping to see Watson, and to thank him, but I never saw him again. I was sad that day in 1922 that brought me word of his death. Thomas E. Watson had a long and distinguished career, although he served only one term in the lower House — 1891–93; the 52nd Congress. He claimed always, and I think rightly, that he was elected to the two following Congresses, but was counted out. He was the nominee for Vice President of the Populist party in 1896. He was the candidate of the Populists for President in 1904. He was elected United States Senator from Georgia in 1921. He died September 26, 1922.

He began the publication of *Tom Watson's Magazine* in New York City in 1905. The next year he began the publication of *Watson's Jeffersonian Magazine* and the *Weekly Jeffersonian.* Because in 1917 he opposed the conscription of our soldiers for service abroad, his periodicals were barred from the mails. He was twice indicted and twice tried on account of certain chapters in one of his books, "The Roman Catholic Hierarchy." He was acquitted.

Many of his views were unsound, but more were of such nature that it was a great pity they were not shared by his countrymen. Generally he was ahead of the time — perhaps five hundred years on some subjects. He was absolutely independent and fearless in his opinions. He hated sham and hypocrisy. He had a passion for liberty.

Like so many ahead of their time, he was impatient with the people because they were so indifferent and dumb. His love for the people made him all the more impatient. Once I sent him a newspaper clipping and on the margin I wrote: "I have learned not to be easily discouraged. I am afraid of that which is soon popular. That which is quickly attained is rarely of much value and sometimes is an evil. That which is easy is rarely worth while." He wrote on the clipping and returned it to me: "Sloppy sentiment; nice language; and not for the friend of mankind."

That reveals an unfortunate characteristic which led to his loss of many friends.

John S. Henderson, of North Carolina, who was the chairman of the House Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, February 17, 1893, served in Congress 1885 to 1895. He was an able, patriotic, clear-seeing servant of his country.

Shelby M. Cullom was a member of the Illinois House several terms and was Speaker two terms; member of Congress 1865–71; placed General Grant in nomination for the Presidency at the Republican national convention in Philadelphia in 1872; was Governor of Illinois 1876–83; United States Senator 1883–1913. He died January 28, 1914.

He has to his credit the Interstate Commerce Law. He was an able, industrious, honest, patriotic, but not brilliant, man. During his long service in the lower and the upper branches of Congress he accomplished much more for his country than will ever be placed to his credit. He was not spectacular. He was not a good self-advertiser.

He was heartily for the delivery of mail to farmers. He was always the wise friend of the farmer. If he had not been so wise or so conscientious he would have been more popular with the farmers. He helped me more than once during the years from 1883 to 1913 — the years of my efforts in Washington to secure legislation for the farmers.

When my two children were quite small — say seven and five years of age — the Stahl family journeyed to Niagara Falls and from there to Washington. Of course we all four called on Senator Cullom, who had been my good friend for so many years. He had his secretary fill out a pass to the visitors' gallery for each of the four of us, and he signed each pass himself. I mention this to call attention to one of his most pronounced characteristics: kindness. He was a very kind, fatherly sort of man. He delighted to help the person that he thought was honestly trying to do something for the public good. I have never heard it mentioned by anyone, but I am sure that Shelby M. Cullom and Joseph G. Cannon, were, under the hide, much alike.

In the 52nd Congress were notable men. John M. Palmer was in the Senate from Illinois. "Long Whiskered Peffer," a good friend of mine though we disagreed on all public questions — I wrote for the *Kansas Farmer* for years while he was its editor and before he was its editor — was one of the Senators from Kansas. David B. Hill was one of the Senators from New York.

In the House there was one of the very best friends the farmers ever had: Leonidas F. Livingston, of Georgia. As Samuel A. Guard would say, he was farm-minded. He was vice-president of the Georgia State Agricultural Society for eleven years and president for four years. He was president of the Georgia State Alliance for three years. He served in both branches of the Georgia legislature. He was a member of Congress from 1891 until his death in 1912.

I began writing for the *Southern Cultivator* at Atlanta, Georgia, in the early 1880's, if not in 1878 or 1879. What I wrote early attracted the attention and gained the favor of Livingston. Our ideas were nearly always the same. He was a Southerner all the way through; and a broad, patriotic man. Through the *Southern Cultivator,* and the other Southern farm papers for which I wrote regularly, we had many mutual friends, working for the same objects. Needless to say that Livingston was heartily in favor of the delivery of mail to farmers. He was a hard, conscientious worker during the sessions of Congress, but was not much given to debate. Doubtless that is why he did not participate in the debate on the Watson amendment. My recollection is that during that debate he was at his desk — there were desks in the House and Senate chambers then. He was a very effective aid by means of friendly personal talk and more votes are made for measures in the coat rooms, corridors, committee rooms, members' offices, etc., than are won by the oratory in the chambers. The farmers of Georgia and of the United States should cherish the memory of such men as Leonidas F. Livingston.

In the early 1890's there was much ill feeling, bitterness, controversy, harsh language in both branches of Congress. The Civil War was yet in the near background. Partisan feeling between the Republicans and the Democrats was deeper and sharper than it is now. Among the noted Republican "debaters" was Boutelle of Maine. Equally noted among the Democratic "debaters" was DeArmand of Missouri. Because of his successful activity in the North's army during the Civil War as well as because of his merciless tongue, the Democrats loyally hated Boutelle. I was in the visitors' gallery of the House the day after the Watson amendment went through. On that eighteenth day of February 1893, DeArmand and Boutelle were complimenting each other, as they so often did, and DeArmand said of the man from Maine: "I do not doubt that the gentleman has the courage of his convictions; I know he has the venom of his prejudices."

Postmaster-General Bissell refused to use the $10,000 appropriation. In my address to the National Grange I said:

> It will be noticed that Mr. Bissell says this money was to be expended at his discretion. He is mistaken. The law says it *shall* be expended. When did the Postmaster-General get the right to pass on the laws of Congress and nullify those that he chooses? That same bill did contain an appropriation to be expended at the discretion of the Postmaster-General. The item reads: "Provided, that no part of the appropriation made by this paragraph shall be expended unless the Postmaster-General shall deem such expenditure necessary to promote the interest of the postal service."
>
> That was discretionary with Mr. Bissell, and he spent it — every cent of it. What was it? It was $196,614 for necessary and special mail facilities on trunk lines! Yet Mr. Bissell did not recommend this appropriation and stated in his report that the railroads gave as good service when deprived of it as when they got it.
>
> Postmaster-General Dickinson condemned the principle of it as demoralizing to the service. Postmaster-General Wanamaker condemned it.

Because of his refusal to expend the $10,000 Bissell was severely condemned by Congressmen in the debate on the Post Office appropriation bill March 24, 1894. The bitter debate was precipitated by an amendment offered by Moses, of Georgia, appropriating $20,000 "which shall be applied under the direction of the Postmaster-General to experimental free delivery in rural communities, other than towns and villages." Pickler was especially severe in his condemnation of the Postmaster-General setting himself above Congress and choosing what laws he should observe. Williams, of Mississippi, spoke forcefully and at length in favor of the amendment. He was one of the very earliest and always one of the ablest friends of the delivery of mail to farmers. Loud participated, as he was prone to do, and Pickler told him he had not known what he was talking about, which was true. Wilson, of Washington, opposed the amendment because delivery of mail to farmers would cost $135,000,000 a year. Bryan, of Nebraska, was true to form and argued at length for something not at all germane — free boxes in all post offices for everyone that might ask for one. The best contribution to the debate was by Cannon, of Illinois. A little that he said is well to remember:

> It is within my recollection when mail came once a week, in many cases once in two weeks, and the postage on the letter, to be collected in the main from the receiver, was 25 cents. I have seen it reduced to five cents, then to three; and bore a part in the 47th Congress, a Republican Congress it will be recalled, in which the reduction was made from three to two cents for letter postage.
>
> I recollect also very well that in the 43rd Congress the system of collecting postage on newspapers was changed. The law had been to collect of the receiver of the paper, but the rule was that the postage was not collected, and by that Congress the pound rate prepayment was adopted. In that Congress the package post, practically, had its birth. That also was a Republican Congress. It was of very great advantage to the people, creating competition through the length and breadth of the country of some sixty thousand post offices with the express companies, which resulted in a reduction in the express rates upon packages of at least two thirds, and also built up what is known as the package post system that we have now.
>
> Both of these reforms were valuable, far reaching, and profitable in the main to the government, but more profitable to the individuals composing the government. I have seen the reduction of postage on letters after fair trial bring increased revenue. We have seen the franking privilege practically extended to the newspapers and periodicals, the benefit in fact resulting to those who received the publications.

At the end of the day's debate the amendment was adopted. It was part of the Post Office appropriation bill when it became a law. The Postmaster-General did not use a dollar of it for the purpose for which it was appropriated.

Charles L. Moses was always a Georgia planter. He was a member of the Farmers Alliance, but was elected as a Democrat to the 52nd, 53rd, and 54th Congresses. He held aloft and valiantly carried the banner of real rural mail delivery when Tom Watson had to lay it down.

Holman of Indiana and Cannon of Illinois were good friends. Both were prone to participate in the debate. Quite often their views were the same. There was this difference, however: Holman very rarely knew what he was talking about until he had talked for some time, and not infrequently did not hesitate to say so; Cannon always knew what he was talking about and generally knew about the subject as well as anyone in the chamber. He had, in 1894, a well-earned reputation, among members of Congress and the people, for being well informed on a marvelous number of useful subjects. He was not in the 52nd Congress, hence could not participate in the debate on the Watson amendment. If he had been in Congress he would have been heartily in favor of the $10,000 appropriation. He served in the 43rd to the 51st Congresses, inclusive; the 53rd to the 62nd, inclusive; and the 64th to the 66th, inclusive. His Congressional service totaled 44 years! In 1920 he declined re-election and retired with the close of the 66th Congress, March 3, 1921. He was one of the score of most useful men in Congress during the history of the United States. Also, one of the most interesting, because original and independent; and one of the best loved, because while he was harsh on rare occasions, he was always kind-hearted. I think that he had a good many sad moments during the last years of his life: sad not because of himself, for he was truly thankful to have lived, but because of the unintelligence and indifference of the people. He felt that in the hurry, hurry, hurry, the scramble, the pushing, to get money, and more than was needed to satisfy the simple wants that are all the wise will have, the people were indifferent to the better things of life and would not stop to get for themselves the conditions that would have made life easier and fuller. I will never forget the sadness in his voice as he mentioned this the last time I talked with him. Yet he was jolly and laughed with me about some quaint observations of his and about what another Congressman had said to me. I have never known another man that saw so readily and surely into the minds and purposes of other men; or said so little about it.

THE FINAL DEBATE ON RURAL MAIL DELIVERY

THE *Congressional Record* reports a debate in the House, *lasting a week* in early March 1902, on a provision of the Post Office appropriation bill appropriating a sum for free delivery of mail to farmers. *This was the final debate on this proposition.* We will get some interesting glimpses of the effort, a real contest, as late as 1902, for this real rural mail delivery.

In the course of this very animated and very long debate, Henry Sherman Boutell, of Illinois, pointed out that in 1896, in the Post Office appropriation bill for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1897, $40,000 had been appropriated for " experimental free delivery in rural communities, other than towns and villages "; and that forty-four routes had been established, the first at Charleston, West Virginia, in October 1896.

Wilson was Postmaster-General when these routes were established. In 1895–1896 he consulted with Loud, chairman of the House Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, and others, about mail delivery to farmers. He was superior to the average of Cleveland's Cabinets. Those whom he consulted were nearly all Southern members of Congress and they were almost unanimous for mail delivery to farmers. To Postmaster-General Wilson must be given the honor of establishing the first mail delivery to farmers, but if he believed in it at all he believed in it in a half-hearted way, and to his successor should be given much more of the credit.

Appropriations for real rural mail delivery — to farmers — in addition to the above, were as follows: For the fiscal year 1898, $150,000; 1899, $460,000; 1900, $1,750,000; 1901, $3,500,000.

In the debate March 4, 1902, it was brought out that in 1895 Postmaster-General Wilson was convinced that rural carriers could be got at $300 a year. In fact, rural mail delivery was started with carriers getting that salary. At that time Cannon predicted that the $300 a year salary would not last long. It was raised to $400, and then to $500, and in 1902, $600 a year was being paid. One reason for this advance was, as stated by Loud in the debate March 3, that the Post Office Department had prohibited the carriers from doing certain things although their work as carriers took less than one-half of a farmer's day, and, continued Loud, " there is no doubt in the world that they " — the Post Office Department — " propose to prohibit him from doing anything else but carry the mail." That proved to be a good prophecy. Loud thought that if the carrier was prohibited from doing anything other than carry his route he should be paid $1,000 a year.

The cost of rural mail delivery worried Cannon, Loud, and others. One of the very best speeches of the week-long debate was made by Henry C. Smith, of Michigan, who said: " What other department of the government is in any sense self-sustaining? There is no profit in the Department of State, in the Treasury Department, or in the War or the Navy, or the Interior, or the Department of Agriculture. This government is not run for profit. It is not a business enterprise; it is a service."

Said Boutell, of Illinois, March 6: "The clause in the appropriation bill for this year relating to rural free delivery is the same clause that has been incorporated into the bill for the last six or seven years, which is as follows: 'For experimental rural free delivery, including pay of carriers, horse hire allowance, supplies, and mechanical appliances, etc.' $3,500,000. With an appropriation of over $3,000,000, with 7,700 routes in operation, there is, as

I have said, no rural delivery authorized and established by law. The only law on the statute books relating to rural free delivery is the clause contained in the two lines and a half that I have read, making an appropriation for the service."

The friends of free delivery of mail to farmers triumphed in the long debate of March 1902, and rural free delivery was taken out of the "experimental" class. It was authorized definitely by the law of the land.

October 1, 1929, there were 43,623 rural carriers in service, of whom 96 per cent were motorized. The total length of rural routes was 1,322,419 miles. The annual travel as of that date was approximately 400,691,700 miles.

CREDIT MISPLACED OR WITHHELD

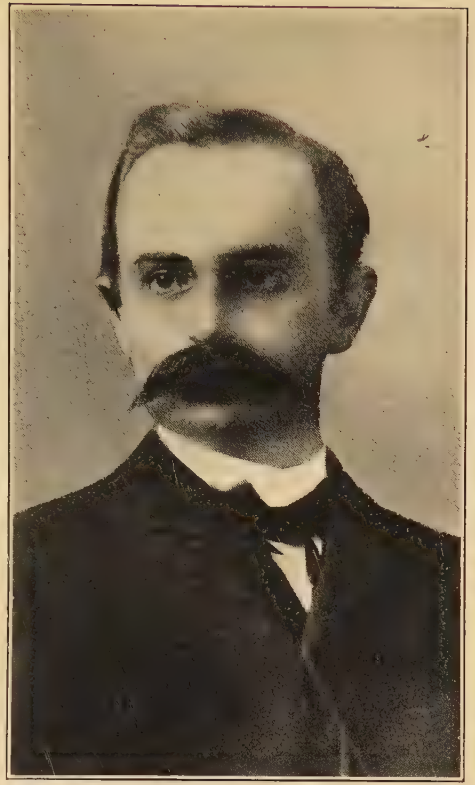
It is amusing, and yet annoying, that the credit for the victory has been persistently claimed for those persons and organizations not entitled to it; and that some that helped mightily have not been given credit except by the few. A Michigan Congressman, for example, was before and at the time of his death, proclaimed by a few as the "father of free mail delivery to farmers." As a matter of fact, when the effort for mail delivery to farmers was a dozen years old he came to a meeting of the Farmers' National Congress with a resolution in favor of rural free delivery, which to him was a new thing! The same claim has been made for other Congressmen, and the *Congressional Record* shows that they did not have a word to say about rural mail delivery until it was established. An assistant postmaster-general, famous in his day for his "practical politics," who certainly never said a recorded word in favor of rural free delivery until all of fifteen years after I had proposed it and until years after appropriations had been made to test the Wanamaker brand and until after appropriations had been made to test the real article, was content to have made for him the claim that he was the "father of rural mail delivery" because he had the handling of the seventh or eighth appropriation for it! But he was of the school that was taught to "claim everything" and "don't let anything get away." At least seven public men have been anxious to be known as the "father of rural mail delivery." Not one of them was the least entitled to the honor. And those public men that did aid in getting rural mail delivery, that were among its earliest friends, Watson and Livingston and Henderson and Moses and Cannon and Pickler and the others, have got little credit. But that is what occurs right along. I believe that the following, which appeared in the Parkersburg (W. Va.) *Journal* in 1895, when the facts were yet plain, states the truth. I know that it was written after a careful investigation of claims:

> To Mr. Stahl belongs the honor of having first proposed rural mail delivery, which he did in 1879. From that time until free delivery to farmers was achieved, Mr. Stahl always led in the movement to secure it. He spoke in favor of it in nearly every State in the Union, before boards of trade, chautauqua assemblies, all kinds of farmers' meetings, etc., and his forceful pen was always busy and articles from it in favor of free mail delivery to farmers appeared in every one of the thousands of "patent inside" newspapers in the United States, in practically every metropolitan daily, and even in the *North American Review*.

Of all the editorials that aided me in my fight, and the newspapers became liberal indeed in editorial support, I have only one — an able, lengthy editorial in the Atlanta *Constitution* — about my article in the *North American Review*. I hope that my acknowledging it here will serve as my grateful acknowledgment of the aid of the press, without which I would not hope to gain anything worth while for the public welfare.

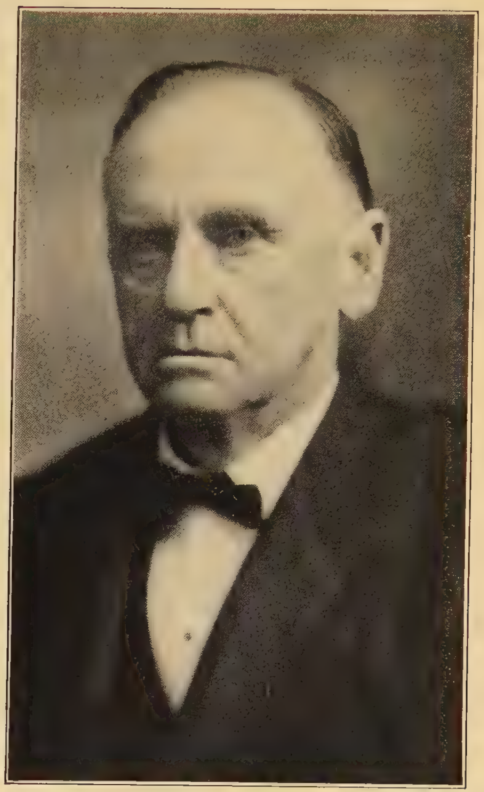
WHY THE JOB TOOK SO LONG

PROBABLY the reader wonders why it took so long to get the delivery of mail to farmers. It took ten years to create such public sentiment that Congress felt compelled to take



Hon. CHARLES L. MOSES

Hon. THOMAS E. WATSON



Hon. JOHN STEELE
HENDERSON

some action, which it did by making provision for experiments in the Wanamaker spurious rural mail delivery — "in towns and villages." It took three years longer to obtain provision for experiments in real rural mail delivery and then nearly four years to get the Post Office Department to obey the law enacted by Congress.

But how many pieces of legislation of equal effect, far-reaching and deep, have been obtained in a shorter time of campaign from the very inception of the proposal, there being no war or threat of war, and the financial condition of the people and the national government for much of the time well below normal?

Consider, dear reader, the condition of the farmers and the esteem, rather the lack of esteem, in which they were held by themselves and others. To do that rightly you must read much in the papers, books, and reports that reveal conditions in the 1870's and 1880's.

Consider, also, that when I proposed the delivery of mail to farmers the total gross receipts of the Post Office Department were less than $50,000,000 per annum, and that for years the Postmaster-General declared that the annual cost of what I proposed would be at least $135,000,000. In time this figure was reduced to $125,000,000.

In 1929 the receipts and expenditures of the Post Office Department were more than eighteen times what they were in 1879.

Consider, again, that the revenues of the national government did not meet its expenditures.

Then multiply the present gross income of the Post Office Department by 135 and divide by 50.

Multiply that result by the ratio of the respect for the farmer now by what it was then.

Increase this by the increase of the disposition of the people of this country to favor the business activities and consequent expenditure of the national government.

Finally, increase it in proportion to the decrease in the size of the dollar in the eyes of the people.

You will see that what a nineteen-year-old "hayseed" proposed was fully the equivalent of a proposition that now the national government spend annually $4,000,000,000 on something so radical as to be revolutionary; something without precedent under conditions that make any grounds for comparison; something of such character and extent as to be truly astounding.

That figure of $4,000,000,000 is conservative, as you will plainly perceive if you dig deep until you can accurately determine all the conditions to be considered.

In addition, you can safely allow six years of necessary campaigning on account of the bitter hostility of the Cleveland administrations, the sound money majority, and all the conservative element of the people of the country, due to the fight of the Grange and all other of the nine farmer organizations (except the Farmers' National Congress) on J. Sterling Morton, Secretary of Agriculture, and especially their loud cry for the free and unlimited coinage of silver and their advocacy of the issue of greenbacks to make the circulating medium fifty dollars per capita. Also, the persistent demand of some of them that the government lend money at two percent per annum to farmers on the security of their farms or that it put into effect the subtreasury plan.

Then add three years for the Wanamaker spurious rural mail delivery. When I labor for legislation, of all things protect me from the verisimilitude thereof!

When you have done all this, you will see that the callow hayseed did not do so badly. In less than fourteen years he had won with his proposition into the farm papers, the big dailies, the "patent inside" local papers, the leading reviews, farmers' meetings, meetings of the city people, the chautauquas, and the Congress of the United States. And he had won for his "craze" the support of those able friends that made success possible. All thanks to them!

And he had no organization whatever back of him for the first ten years. He had no expense fund other than his own means. His most dependable resources, indeed, were a speedy pen and hours stolen from sleep for a cause that proved to be its own reward. Fortunately he could drive home the truth in homely speech, and his ancestors had bestowed on him an inexhaustible tenacity. And he gathered fresh determination whenever he saw the worn faces and looked into the tired eyes of the farm women of his audiences, for he knew that what he was fighting for would shatter the awful isolation and monotony of farm life.

With the years I am given an increasing measure of happiness that I stuck to the fight for mail delivery to farmers, for I am sure that nothing else yet done by legislation, nor any other change in conditions affecting the farmers of the United States, has brought to them near the benefit, has had for their well-being an influence nearly as wide and deep, as has the daily delivery of mail. It has changed the conditions of farm life altogether, and it has as much changed the farm people. It has hastened to the farmer, to shape him and his life, other potent agencies. Whatever the decades and the centuries may bring, the farmers of the United States, their ideas, their plane of living, can never be as near the dumb, unseeing as it was before contact with town and city, multiplied intelligence, the breaking forth of mind and spirit, followed the calls of the mail carrier at the farmyard gate.

Both the agency and the change it wrought were fundamental. The effect reached out to the very rim of the farmer's being, it touched every point of his business and life, it went down to the depths of his thought and motives. It made him a profoundly changed man. Its effect on his wife was greater. It is not rhetoric, but a plain, vital truth, that it raised the eyes of farm people until they saw, not always the ground to be cultivated, but more and more the heavenly vision to be followed.

CHAPTER XI

PARCEL POST: EARLY WORK

SOME EARLY LEADERS

YEARS before I was actively interested in the movement there had been no small agitation for a modern parcel post. In the effort for it one organization stood out far in advance of all others: the Postal Progress League. Prominent in it as he was in many good works for agriculture was George M. Whitaker, for years publisher of the *New England Farmer,* of Boston; secretary and then president of the Farmers' National Congress; for years holding an important position in the Department of Agriculture and active in the war on the illegal sale of oleomargarine; and at the time of his untimely death in 1914, assistant editor of *Hoard's Dairyman,* then as now a periodical of much influence, and edited and owned by the man who did so much for all the people of Wisconsin, but especially the farmers, and who had served the state as its governor: Wm. D. Hoard. But the most active and prominent member of the Postal Progress League and, in fact, up to 1908 the most active and prominent advocate of a modern parcel post, was James Lewis Cowles, who was a profound student of railway problems; member of the Cobden Club of England; and for years secretary of the Postal Progress League. He was a contributor to some of the leading periodicals of the country on the railway, the tariff, municipal government, public ownership, public works, and the post office. He held degrees of A.M. and LL.B. from Yale and was a man of unusual information and culture. He died in his eightieth year October 22, 1922.

I first met Mr. Cowles in 1910. I had been warned that, to use the words of my informants, he was a "crank," "to be pitied." I felt interested in such a man, for I had not had time to forget that I had been spoken of in a similar way during the first years of my advocacy of the free delivery of mail to farmers.

I was soon made aware that the principal reason for the opinions of Mr. Cowles indicated by these expressions was that when he could not get money from others for his expense in his campaign for a modern parcel post, he used his own money — if he had any. Indeed it would be more correct to say that when he had no money of his own to spend in this campaign, he got money from others. When his home had burned he exclaimed, "It was insured; now I will have that much more money for parcel post!" I was told that by so many that I am sure it is true. Among those who told it to me was Whitaker, who could not say anything harsher about Cowles than this: "He is sometimes so radical that he is a hindrance; but he is so devoted to parcel post, he has made such sacrifices — he hardly gives himself enough to eat — if he has any money he spends it for parcel post — he is to be pitied possibly, but certainly should not be blamed." And that soon became my judgment. I admired him and was vexed with him. For the sake of parcel post I wished that he did not have the insanely impracticable ideas that entitled him to pity. There could not be a more honest, patriotic man. I was compelled to oppose him when he declared to the committees of the House and the Senate that parcels must be carried like letters: the same charge regardless of distance. When he said that he destroyed nearly all his influence with the committees; it was only too plain that he had done the parcel post cause a real injury. But no one questioned his motives.

Among those who did effective work for a modern parcel post was George von Lengerke Meyer, a man of education, wealth and great business ability who had been successful in handling extensive business affairs, and who had been a member of the Boston Common Council and the Board of Aldermen and of the Massachusetts Legislature before he was Ambassador to Italy 1900–05 and to Russia 1905–07. He was Postmaster-General in the Cabinet of President Roosevelt, March 4, 1907, to March 6, 1909, and Secretary of the Navy in the Cabinet of President Taft, March 6, 1909, to March 5, 1913. He died March 9, 1918. He was an able, honest, patriotic man, gifted with much common sense as well as executive ability, and with unusual personal charm.

Mr. Meyer was much more interested in the postal savings bank system than in the parcel post. His business training had made him interested in banking; and when abroad he had seen the benefits from postal savings banks in foreign countries. The best evidence about the public activities of Mr. Meyer is found in his biography by M. A. DeWolfe Howe. The index to Howe's book cites sixteen references to postal savings banks and only seven to the parcel post.

His letters to his wife and his entries in his diary show how earnest Meyer was about the postal savings banks. I think that for them we are indebted to him far more than to anyone else.

He and I worked harmoniously for the parcel post, but we were both of the independent sort, each inclined to his own way. He attached more importance than I did to appearing before Congressional committees. The last time I saw him he said that he had come more to believe with me in the fundamental importance of educating the public. He took more to heart than I did the abuse and misrepresentation, lying and ridicule, of our opponents. I knew that he was also annoyed by the claims made by or for certain people, who were entitled to little, if any, credit for the modern parcel post; claims that detracted from the credit due him and others. Hence when there appeared in the Chicago *Tribune* an editorial that placed the credit where it belonged, and of course gave him a large share of it, I sent him a copy and received this note:

89 State Street, Boston, Mass.
January 12, 1914

Mr. John M. Stahl
Legislative Agent,
Farmers' National Congress,
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Mr. Stahl:

Yours of the 2nd inst. received. I appreciate very much the cutting which you sent me from the Chicago *Tribune.* I think you and I, as you said, both did good work, and it is pleasant to have it recognized at this time when others are reaping the glory.

Faithfully Yours,
G. v. L. Meyer

Another helpful friend of parcel post was John W. Weeks, who resembled Meyer in being an able, successful business man who had held important public positions in his city and State before he was elected to Congress in 1904. He served in Congress 1905–13. He was Senator from Massachusetts 1913–19. He was Secretary of War in the Cabinets of Presidents Harding and Coolidge, March 4, 1921 until his death July 12, 1926. In the Republican national convention of 1916 he received votes from twenty-five States, in number second only to the nominee. He was a graduate of the Naval Academy and had an important part in the naval service during the Spanish-American War. He was chairman of the House Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads when the effort for a modern parcel post was most earnest. His position made it possible for him to help or hinder very much. He helped. I found him always gracious, kind, earnest, and above all things desirous of doing that which would be best for his country.

Second to none in the desire to help or the fact of helping was William S. Bennet, member of Congress from New York City 1905–11 and 1915–17, and author of the first bill for a parcel post on rural routes. Before being elected to Congress he had been a member of the New York Legislature and a judge of the Municipal Court of New York City. No other member of Congress was always so ready to aid the friends of a modern parcel post, and no other Congressman was so helpful, except John W. Weeks. Mr. Bennet is an able lawyer and business executive, and is now a resident of Evanston, Illinois.

I TAKE A PART

KNOWING of my work for the delivery of mail to farmers, Postmaster-General Meyer sent me word by Whitaker that he wished to discuss parcel post with me. When Whitaker returned to Washington he took to Meyer the information that on account of business and the annual meeting of the National Civic Federation I would go to New York early in January (1908) and that on my return I would stop off and see the Postmaster-General in Washington. I was just a little surprised to find Meyer at the meeting of the Federation and on his suggestion we went to his room and had a long conference. I found that he appreciated the work I had done to create public opinion in favor of several projects and he very much desired to get my ideas about awakening the public. It was plain to me, however, that he placed less value than I did on the letters and other expressions of opinion of voters and more on work with Congressional committees. He wished to consider carefully several propositions I submitted to him and vice versa. Hence it was decided that when I returned to my home I should put Washington on my route. This I did and we had a long conference in his office. At that conference we reached an agreement about our plan of work. I found that as a general thing he knew Eastern Congressmen and Senators better than I did, while I knew better than he the Western Congressmen and Senators. It is always very helpful to know the peculiarities of the men you wish to influence.

Mr. Meyer and I decided that it would be useless at that time to ask for a complete modern parcel post, and that work for it would so alarm certain large elements of our population that such work would do the cause of a modern parcel post more harm than good. Hence the first move in the campaign we agreed on was a letter he addressed to me, advocating only a parcel post on rural routes. In this letter he stated that he had recommended an increase in weight limit and a reduction of rates in the parcel post and that he favored a "local parcel post on rural routes."

Within sixty days after the receipt of that letter I had mailed a copy of it to more than 16,000 periodicals; very nearly all in the best directory of publications of the United States. Of course I sent a copy of the letter to every member of both branches of Congress and also to several thousand people of prominence.

In the summer of 1908 I prepared and had printed four circulars about a modern parcel post for the United States, which soon became the basis of all the arguments for a modern parcel post and which attracted much attention in several foreign countries.

Of course I kept my pen busy. Articles in favor of a modern parcel post from that pen appeared in a wide variety of periodicals. I was able, through certain of my connections and the kindness of three firms whose business it was to get what I called "concealed advertising," to get my arguments in many papers in the form of telegraphic dispatches from all parts of the country, and quite frequently as editorials. By the beginning of 1910 I was credited with making more noise in favor of a modern parcel post than anyone else and my leadership was recognized at the time of the hearing on a modern parcel post before the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads of the House in April of that year.

That hearing was notable for the reason that it was the first hearing on an enlarged or modern parcel post granted by the post office committee of either the House or the

Senate. The hearing began April 25. The friends of a modern parcel post had designed that I should lead by being the first on the program; but as my good friend, Marcus M. Marks, of New York, a man of much influence among merchants and with a valuable acquaintance among the members of Congress, was compelled to leave Washington within two hours of the opening of the hearing, I was very glad to have him appear first. As soon as he had concluded his brief, but forceful, statement, I was called on, and in the printed report of the hearing my statement occupies thirty pages. In the course of it I said:

> I am frank to say that I have thought that with a general parcel post we must have the zone system or else the government must have a monopoly of the business. That is my judgment. . . . If the farmer wants to send a package by express, he has to drive to town in order to do it, and likely the more difficult part of the journey to a city has been accomplished and he is then tempted by the low railway fare to keep on going. Now, if the farmer could have a way to send the parcel out he would not go to town, and he would not be tempted to go to the larger cities to buy there. . . . I think the gentleman from Missouri knows that among my best friends are local merchants. I would not want to do anything to injure them, and yet I believe that the net gain of our entire people should be considered.

"The gentleman from Missouri" was James T. Lloyd, Congressman. He was a member of the House Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads. Before being elected to Congress he held several important public and elective offices. He was elected to the 55th Congress and was reelected nine times, serving continuously in Congress from 1897 to 1917, when he declined re-election. His district was just across the Mississippi from Quincy, Illinois, in which city I had an office for thirty-five years and from which my farm papers were published. I had many subscribers and other friends in Lloyd's district. He is one of the most sensible and useful and patriotic men that ever occupied a seat in the Congress of the United States.

It will be observed that I wished to be just to everyone and had in mind the interests of the country merchant as well as the farmer.

The representative of the Grange was not so explicit. I quote from the printed report of the hearing:

> "Now, admitting all that has been said as to the effect upon the country merchants, I believe it is more important to give these farmers this thing they believe they ought to have than it is to take care of the country merchant and his family." Question by Mr. Finley: "Has your organization ever passed on the proposition?" Answer by the Grange representative: "Never." Question by Mr. Finley: "Has your organization passed upon the proposition and decided as between the zone system and the one-rate system?" Reply by the Grange representative: "To my knowledge they have not. They have never passed upon the system, although they have passed upon certain bills." Question by Mr. Finley: "What bills were they?" Answer by the Grange representative: "I do not remember now." In more than one place in his statement the representative of the Grange made it plain that he opposed the zone system. At this same hearing the representative of the Farmers' Union stated positively that he was opposed to the zone system. He said: "I believe in the one-rate system." In reply to the questions of several Congressmen he stated that his "organization has never expressed an opinion" on the different features of the parcel post legislation. He said: "I do not believe that the farmer ought to be held down to satisfy the local retail merchant."

Neither did I. Nor did I think it at all necessary. That is one reason why I favored the zone system. Of course I was well aware that certain foreign countries had a modern parcel post system without zones or with only two or three zones; but in those countries there were no carriers like our express companies nor were there "mail order houses" like those in this country; and the distances within each country were shorter. It seemed to me, I will be frank to say, that nearly all the prominent advocates of a modern parcel post, one reaching to the home of the farmer, acted on theories and without going to the trouble to dig out actual facts and figures and act on them. I took into account the conditions peculiar to this country; I recognized the existence here of the express companies and the mail order houses. I thought the mail order houses were doing well enough and I opposed such a parcel post as would give them yet greater advantage over the local merchant, for without doing that we could have an adequate parcel post reaching out to the farm.

To a question by Lloyd during the hearing I made a reply which he commended for its candor. I said that "I believe it is well to make haste slowly, and while in the beginning it probably would be best to have a parcel post limited to the rural routes, yet I believe that the United States is entitled to as good a parcel post as any country, and that we should have a modern parcel post."

All the way through the most serious obstacles in the way of a modern parcel post were the friends of the express companies and the extremists who wanted and would take only that which was impracticable and clearly would be injurious to many of our people.

Very honestly I could maintain a friendly attitude toward Congress. During the hearing April 25 I said in reply to a question by Hamer: "I have a much better opinion of Congress and Congressmen than some people have, and I have said that to the chairman of this committee. I have never known a Congressman who was not a good representative of the people of his district; and, as I said before, I am willing to trust the intelligence and wisdom of this committee and of Congress as to this parcel post business." Hamer said that was "refreshing, coming from a newspaper man. We are not used to that." Which led me to call on the chairman of the committee to testify to an editorial in my farm paper the previous January, which was complimentary to Congress.

RANK DISCRIMINATION IN FAVOR OF FOREIGNERS

IN THE *Twentieth Century Magazine* for June 1910, I had an article on the Modern Parcel Post that brought me more letters, I think, than any other article from my pen on this subject, and I must confess that I wrote many. The *Twentieth Century Magazine,* published in Boston and edited by B. O. Flower, while not sensational or frothy, was exceedingly forward-looking, permitted in its pages the discussion of only the livest subjects, was hospitable to radical thinkers, and made quite a stir during its short existence.

My article was a long argument for a modern parcel post and the opening paragraphs read as follows:

> I read to some friends, unusually intelligent people: "In Karafuto (Japanese) Saghalien-Kushunkotan (Korsakoff), Uradimirofuka (Vladimirofka), Gaukinousasukoe (Galkino-Varskoe) and Mauka."
>
> None was sure, but some thought that the places named, presuming that they were places, are certainly in the Russian Empire and one guessed that they are in Saghalien.
>
> I continued: "Antoken, Choshun, Dairen, Daisekkio, Daitoko, Furanten, Gaihei, Giukaton, Gwaboten, Howojio, Kaigen, Haijio, Kinshu, Koshurei, Riojun, Riojuton, Rioyo, Senkinsai, Shiheigai, Shinminfu, Shoto, Sokako, Sokaton Taikozan, Tetsurei, Yendai, Yugakujio."
>
> This time some were quite sure that certain of the places are in Manchuria, but none was sure as to more than half of the places named.
>
> I read again: "Aitutaki, Atin, Hervey (Manuai), Mangaia, Mauke, Mitiaro and Rarotonga; also the Islands of Palmerston (Avarau), Manahik, Penrhyh (Tongreva), Pukapuka (Danger), Rakaanga, Savage (Nide), and Suwarrow."
>
> As a matter of fact, the names in the first sentence I read are of places in the island more familiarly known to us as Saghalien and of which the native name is Karafuto; the names following are of places in Manchuria; and the third list is of islands in the far Pacific.
>
> I read these names from a placard of the Post Office Department of the United States announcing that between the places named, also Formosa, Korea, Australia, New Zealand, more than a dozen cities of China, and thirty foreign countries, on the one side, and the United States on the other, there is a parcel post in which the weight limit is eleven pounds and the postage rate is twelve cents a pound.
>
> Within the United States the weight limit of the parcel post is four pounds and the postage rate is sixteen cents a pound.
>
> It will be seen that in the eyes of our government the foreigner in Manchuria or Karafuto or the Cook Islands or New Zealand or China, is much better than are the citizens of this Republic.

Little comment is needed. The facts speak for themselves.

From Yokohama to San Francisco is 5216 miles; from Tokio to Seattle is 4865 miles. It will be seen that our government is so kind to a Japanese residing temporarily in Boston that he can send to a friend in Uradimirofuka, a distance of more than 8000 miles by the nearest route, a package weighing eleven pounds at a cost of only twelve cents a pound. But if you, being a citizen of the United States and at home, wish to send a parcel through the mail to your friend in the nearest town, five miles away, or to any other town within the United States, you are not permitted to send more than four pounds weight and you must pay sixteen cents a pound!

But if your friend went beyond the limits of the United States and yet 5000 miles farther, then you would have to pay only twelve cents a pound! The longer the haul the less the charge — to favor the foreigner! The shorter the distance the higher the charge — to hurt our own people!

Our Post Office Department is very certain that it should not render any service at less than cost. It readily agreed with foreigners to carry parcels 8000 miles and even farther for twelve cents a pound. Therefore it is reasonable to suppose that carrying these parcels costs not to exceed twelve cents a pound for 8000 miles or more. That being true, surely our Post Office Department could carry parcels within the limits of our own country for our own people for not more than eight cents a pound. And if it can carry an eleven pound parcel for the foreigner there is no good reason why it can not carry an eleven pound package for our own people.

In passing, is our Post Office Department designed to make money or to give our people a first-class service? And should foreigners, who do not contribute the least to the support of our government, who would fight, not with us, but against us, and who are certainly none too friendly in their attitude, be favored so much above our own citizens by our Post Office Department?

It will be seen that the facts made a strong argument. Then the odd names attracted attention. More than one Congressman told me that nothing else had produced so many editorials directed square at him, or as many letters. Shakespeare to the contrary, if those furrin names had been Marion or Jackson or Happy Hollow or such the article would not have had such an effect. It was evident that some time after my article had appeared in the *Twentieth Century Magazine* and had stirred up the editors and some

Congressmen had called at the Post Office Department, the attitude of that Department changed somewhat. It resented that any part of the responsibility for the disparity in the parcel post service to foreigners and to our own people should be placed on the Post Office Department. So did ex-Postmaster-General Meyer. For a time he was very cool to me.

It will be well for the people of the United States to be sure that *now foreigners are not the much more highly favored by our parcel post service.*

In my brief for a modern parcel post which I submitted to the House Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, and the corresponding committee of the Senate, in April 1910, I used much the same facts and arguments that I used in my article in the *Twentieth Century Magazine.* This brief was made a part of the *Congressional Record.* More than 20,000 copies were distributed.

CONCERNING THE EXPRESS COMPANIES

WITHIN thirty days after the appearance of this brief in the *Congressional Record* I had received hundreds of letters praising it in the highest terms and saying that nothing more could be said. To me it is significant that neither in Congress nor out did anyone seriously attempt to answer my arguments. The brief was referred to often, but its statements were never answered. It is, of course, extremely long. It can not be reproduced here, but some of the facts it states should be brought to the attention of the people of the United States:

> The facts submitted, and which were all taken from the official reports of the express companies, can not be disputed, and show, for example, that the per cent of profit on express business in 1909 was for the Wells-Fargo Co. 70.7 per cent; and that the gross receipts of the American Express Co. in 1909 were $31,909,721, its capital used in the express business was $1,716,004, its net earnings from the express business were $1,809,254, and therefore its annual per cent

of profit on the capital really invested in the express business was 105.6.

Generally speaking, the railroad contract provides that the express company shall pay to the railroad fifty per cent of its gross earnings. The contracts range from 45 to 55 per cent. If the express company wants to increase its revenues by five cents a hundred pounds, it must increase the rate charged the shipper by ten cents per hundred pounds, as half of the advance will go to the railroads. Similarly, if a railroad thinks that it is not getting enough revenue and persuades the express company to advance its rates, the increase must be made double the amount desired by the railroad. This is the more easily accomplished because the railroads of the United States hold stock in the express companies. For the fiscal year 1906 the railroads owned $20,668,000 of the capital stock of the express companies and the express companies held $34,542,950 of the stock and bonds of the railroads. At the same time the express companies owned $11,618,125 of the stock of other express companies. For the fiscal year 1909 the amounts paid to the railroads for transportation by the four principal express companies were as follows: Adams, $14,945,896.56; American, $14,621,072.16; United States, $7,882,906.93; Wells-Fargo, $11,416,199.60. This means that the railroads received slightly more than 47.7 per cent of the aggregate charges collected on express parcels passing over their rails. The remaining 52.3 per cent represents the charge for terminal services, that is, the part of the service which is directly performed by the express companies.

The facts given are especially significant as showing the close relationship, the interlocking, of the express companies with the railways and of one company with all the others. There was no real competition. Probably there was never a better conceived or executed plan to mulct the public. The figures given in the extract show the magnitude of the stake. No wonder it was charged that "money was spent like water" to defeat the provisions for a parcel post that could be put into a law and to help along the bills that could not be put into a law or that would take out of the national treasury many millions of dollars to buy out the express companies at several times what they were worth. For these figures also indicate the price the express companies would have put on their property when the government came along to condemn it and take it over, as provided for in the Lewis, the Goeke, and the Gardner bills, favored by the Grange, the Farmers' National Committee on Postal Reform, and by many members of the Postal Progress League. The representatives of the express companies in Washington said generally that the companies should be valued at thirty-three times their net annual income plus a round sum for their franchises. The express companies knew that if any of these bills became law there would be no parcel post until after long years of litigation had allowed the express companies a very large amount for their properties and of course during these years the companies would continue their very profitable business.

Some time after the law for a modern parcel post had been enacted there was a subtle and able effort to have it amended to such extent as to make it little better than the old law. A brochure was prepared and circulated by the friends of the law. I will make a quotation from it because it is a good statement of some of my work:

Effective Help and Effort

June 21, 1910, Congressman Bennet made a part of the *Congressional Record* " A Brief for a Modern Parcel Post, by John M. Stahl, Legislative Agent, Farmers' National Congress." This was the most exhaustive and convincing argument yet made for a modern parcel post for the United States.

Towards the close of 1910 Mr. Stahl prepared a very effective argument to show that a general parcel post would benefit and not injure local dealers. On account of his acquaintanceship with the managers of certain associations serving local papers, he was able to get his argument into several thousand local papers from the small country weekly to the daily in the cities of considerable size. As this is being prepared, there lies before us a copy of the Great Falls, (Mont.) *Leader* of November 24, 1910, in which this argument appears as an editorial. (It so appeared in many papers.) Right beneath it is a copy of the Concord (New Hamp.) *Patriot* of November 15, 1910, in which this article appears as a telegraphic dispatch. And right underneath it is a copy of the Lynchburg (Va.) *News* of November 17, 1910, in which it appears as a "Chicago Letter."

In one or another of these forms it appeared in papers of every state of the Union. During this year Mr. Stahl sent thousands of form letters to the editors of town and city papers. In speaking of these letters he said in his report to the Farmers' National Congress at its annual meeting in October 1911:

> "Some of the fruits were really remarkable. I remember that in making up the list of periodicals that I had sent letters to it was noticed that I had omitted Puck. It never occurred to me that Puck would be interested. My secretary said, 'You have left out Puck.' So we wrote a letter to Puck. I knew I had to write something that would stir them up. Inside of a month they had a strong editorial in favor of parcel post and in six weeks they had a double page cartoon in the center of Puck in favor of a modern parcel post. I went into a little Greek shoe-shining parlor to have my shoes shined and the fellow next to me picked up Puck and he made an exclamation, and a very forcible one, and when I asked him what was the matter he said: 'I am ready now for the world to come to an end: here is Puck with a picture in favor of the parcel post!' And so it was."

Just about this time I got most effective help from F. F. Ingram, of Detroit, in a report he made on the parcel post as chairman of a committee of the Manufacturing Perfumers' Association of the United States. This report was an able document and was widely circulated. In it he quoted me twice at length.

During the latter part of 1910 and early in 1911 a majority of the Congressional leaders and also the President had made it known to me that they were in favor of a parcel post on rural routes; and of the dozen most influential leaders in the House and the Senate a majority had, by June of 1911, declared in favor of a general, modern parcel post. So far as I know these declarations were first made to me. This is so stated in the brochure from which I have quoted, and was so stated generally; and I have never seen it contradicted.

June 29, 1911, President Taft made to me his *first* announcement that he favored a general parcel post. No other announcement could have been at this time so helpful. I will give in full the letter that in a postscript contained a statement that made me dance about the room:

The White House, Washington, D. C.
June 29, 1911

Mr. John M. Stahl
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Sir:

The President is in receipt of your letter in which you call attention to the activities of the Farmers' National Congress and the interest of the farmers of the country generally in securing the establishment of a modern parcel post.

The President recommended, in his annual message of December, 1910, the adoption of the parcel post on all rural delivery routes, with a view to its general extension when the income of the Post Office will permit it and the postal savings banks shall be fully established. The conviction he expressed in his message that it is possible to incorporate at inconsiderable expense a parcel post in the rural delivery system has been strengthened by further investigation on the part of the Post Office Department.

That department, as you know, has several times recommended the introduction of a limited parcel post service on rural routes and has asked legislation from Congress under which the Postmaster-General shall be authorized to undertake the experiment. The President is glad to have the continued support and co-operation of the Farmers' National Congress and of all farmers in presenting to Congress the desirability of this legislation.

Respectfully yours
Charles D. Hilles
Secretary to the President

P.S. The President is strongly in favor of the establishment of a general parcel post, and will recommend the same, without qualification, in his next message.

CHAPTER XII

ENEMIES, FRIENDS, AND SUCCESS

FARMERS' NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON POSTAL REFORM

IN THE publication from which an extract was made in the preceding chapter, prepared because of the danger to the new parcel post law, is this paragraph:

> The person most active in support of these (Lewis-Goeke-Gardner) bills is one Hampton, formerly connected with the firm of Allen & Graham, of New York City, the business of which was exposed by the Senate last year. A short time back the officers of the National Grange tried very hard to have this Hampton expelled from the Grange, and what they said about him certainly leaves nothing to be said by one not interested in that fight.

Hampton used the high-sounding name of "Farmers' National Committee on Postal Reform" for the alleged organization that he claimed he had back of him. I heard it asserted by a good many Congressmen that this high-sounding committee was composed of Hampton, and no more, but this was probably an exaggeration. Still, even Hampton's claims for his committee would condemn it as of little influence. In the *Pennsylvania Grange News* of March 1913, he states that his organization dates from November 1910. Rather late to begin work for a modern parcel post, considering what had been done by the Postal Progress League, the Farmers' National Congress, and other organizations; by Cowles, Whitaker, Meyer, Weeks, and Stahl; and also a rather small beginning. From Hampton's statement it does not appear that more than three

State Granges participated in any way in the formation of his organization.

Nevertheless Hampton and his high-sounding organization was no mean enemy of the parcel post law it was possible and advisable to get enacted. He bitterly opposed that law. Even after it had been enacted more than a month he had in the official organ of the "Progressive Granges" a very long article demanding the enactment of an entirely different law, of which the first item was the purchase of the express companies. The enemies of a modern parcel post in Congress tried to make much capital out of Hampton and his organization, and had some measure of success.

Next to the last paragraph of a long statement published by Hampton read thus: "In the successful fight for the parcel post the National Grange Legislative Committee played a very minor and insignificant part." In its "Select List of References on Parcel Post" the Library of Congress noted three times as many articles and other publications credited to me as to the Master of the National Grange; and no other National Grange officer is credited with any.

Beginning with its annual meeting in 1894, the Farmers' National Congress adopted at each of its annual meetings a resolution in favor of a modern parcel post. I wrote several of those resolutions although, as a matter of policy, I did not introduce them. Up to 1908 others in the Farmers' National Congress were much more active in favor of the modern parcel post than I was.

Besides the Grange and the Farmers' National Congress the only farmer organization of any prominence in 1908–12 was the Farmers' Union. It showed no interest in the parcel post. There were prepared several catalogues of publications about the parcel post, but those that compiled them were not able to find anything of any nature by an officer of the Farmers' Union.

THE KNOCK-OUT ARGUMENT FROM ABROAD

IN THE fall of 1911 I sent return international post cards to eight hundred leading newspapers in foreign countries, especially in Australia and New Zealand, where the population was more sparsely distributed than in this country. On these cards were printed three questions about the effects of the parcel post in the country in which the paper addressed was located, dealing particularly with the effect on local merchants; and requesting a reply. I got more than seven hundred replies. They were unanimous and therefore certainly conclusive, that the parcel post had worked no injury to the local merchant, and that it was often a benefit in permitting him to deal with customers by mail. I published sample replies in a pamphlet which I mailed to all members of Congress and to 14,000 periodicals. In quite a lengthy editorial about this pamphlet the Baltimore *Sun* of June 1, 1912, said:

> One very significant fact brought out is that the largest mail order houses are in the United States, the only great civilized nation which has no parcel post, while in the countries where it has no opposition the mail order firms are comparatively small.

FAIR AND UNFAIR PUBLICATIONS

THE LARGE majority — in fact, nearly all of the daily papers — were fair in their stand and that meant that when the arguments for a parcel post had been understood by them they were for it.

The results of my investigation of the parcel post in foreign countries, especially Australia and New Zealand, were published in nearly every daily in the country, in the "patent inside" of thousands of local papers, and in many trade journals, and the comments upon them were usually just and fair.

But not all were fair. 'The most conspicuous of the unfair sheets was the *Hardware Reporter*, of St. Louis. It had in its issue of July 12, 1912, the most brilliant success I have yet seen of cramming untruthful statements and crass ignorance into two columns. It said:

> John M. Stahl, legislative agent of the Farmers' National Congress, also did some investigating. When not busy with his legislative duties, Mr. Stahl is said to spend his time editing a mail order publication and manufacturing incubators, which he sells to the consumer.

I am very certain that I never edited a mail order publication. Sometimes I wished that I had such a publication. Apparently the mail order publications were very prosperous. I know that I never made or sold an incubator. Sometimes I almost wished that I was the George H. Stahl who did make and sell thousands of good incubators, for his style of living indicated that he had at least two big round bright silver dollars for every scrubby nickel I could find in my pocket.

Every friend of the parcel post should be grateful to the papers of this country. It is only just for me to say that so far as I know the Chicago *Tribune* gave the movement for a modern parcel post better aid than any other paper. It is only just, also, for me to say that as the result of forty years of close observation of the papers of the United States I am sure that not two percent of them can be bought at any price in any sort of coin. I am glad to say this although many of them have opposed what I wished, and at times have "roasted" me to a crisp. I doubt if any other class of men — I do not except even the ministers — are more desirous of doing the right thing, that which is best for all; or have a higher regard for truth and that which is honorable. Sometimes I think that no other class quite equals the newspaper men in their devotion to what they believe to be right and honorable.

In my *Illinois Farmer and Farmer's Call* of June 1, 1912, I had a long editorial about the parcel post which was copied into hundreds of papers. The Chicago *Tribune* copied the editorial into its issue of June 3, and in the same issue had a ringing editorial which closed with this paragraph:

> There are other meritorious parcel post measures before Congress, but the Bourne provisions are in the better parliamentary position and are more likely to be accepted. The friends of the parcel post should put aside pride of opinion and preferences as to details and urge the Bourne provisions as the first step. Amendments or extensions may be urged at another session. What is now desirable is to make a substantial beginning.

SUCCESS COMES WITHIN SIGHT

Senator Bourne, chairman of the Senate post office committee, was in position to exercise a greater influence on parcel post legislation in the Senate than anyone else. He is one of the ablest and highest-minded men ever in the Senate. Because of his hearty advocacy of the parcel post and other things of benefit to the people he incurred the enmity of powerful corporations that are able to exert a great influence on the political fortunes of patriotic men and also of those of an opposite character. I do not know when Senator Bourne was not in favor of a modern parcel post for the United States. Certainly he was in favor of it from the time I first knew his stand. He was too wise and patriotic a man to be fooled into advocacy of a committee of investigation, adroitly advocated to delay a modern parcel post law at least two years, for the Committee on the Post Office of the Senate had had hearings and had made a thorough investigation; and even less would he be in favor of the beautiful scheme to buy out the express companies. I was encouraged to believe that my ideas were right when I found that they coincided with his; we both believed that a zone system was necessary to protect the local merchant and to permit the government to carry packages at a price fair to the people and yet without loss to the government. It was plain that if the government carried packages of the same weight regardless of distances it would have all the long hauls or none. Hence Senator Bourne introduced a bill for a modern parcel post based on the zone system. Of course he could be counted on to do all he honorably could to have his bill made the law for a parcel post. He was a prominent Progressive Republican and had much influence with the Progressive Republicans of the House as well as of the Senate.

James R. Mann, of Chicago, was a Conservative and also the Republican leader of the House. Rather early in my campaign for a parcel post I had sought his support. I resided in his district. We had many mutual friends. It was not easy to bring him to the support of the Bourne Bill. Bourne was a Progressive Republican. The coming events of the summer and fall of 1912 cast their shadows before. It is surprising how many things must be removed out of the way of many a bill in the Congress of the United States. However, Mann was won over. He made to me his *first* announcement that he favored a modern parcel post and his *first* announcement that he would favor the provisions of the Bourne bill for a zoned parcel post. I got Congressman Mann's support for the Bourne provisions early in the summer of 1912. That meant if we could get the support of the President we would get the votes of enough Congressmen to adopt the Bourne bill if it could be got before the House. With Mann and the President for the bill both the Conservative Republicans and the Progressive Republicans would vote for it; and enough Democrats would vote for it to make a majority of the House. I felt sure of a majority in the Senate. One big man's support was yet needed. His name is William Howard Taft.

I had not hesitated to wire or write the President when I thought my doing so might have a good effect. June 8, I wired both the Postmaster-General and the President asking them to support the Bourne bill. Two days later the Postmaster-General announced his support. I received the following wire from the President:

The White House, Washington, D. C.
June 10, 1912

John M. Stahl,
Chicago, Ill.

I am strongly in favor of parcel post legislation on the lines of the bill proposed by Senator Bourne. The Postmaster-General reports to me that the experts of the Department have been working with Senator Bourne and that the bill in its present shape fully meets the views of the Post Office Department. You can count on my giving the bill every assistance in my power.

Wm. H. Taft

That was the *first* announcement of the President that he favored the provisions of the Bourne Bill. It, also, stated the intelligent support of Postmaster-General Hitchcock. Probably here is the best place for me to say that I could never share the opinion of so many about the real attitude of Hitchcock toward the parcel post. Of course the representatives of some organizations and the opponents of a parcel post did not like him and I think that for months before the announcement of June 10, they had been lying about him. I have observed that quite often the "practical politicians" and "representatives of big business" make extra good public officials, especially when the position calls for a high order of business ability.

FINAL DEBATE IN CONGRESS

After June 10, the big job was to get the Bourne bill to a vote in both the House and the Senate. There are many ways of preventing a vote on a bill. But the comments of the press on President Taft's wire to me were of a nature to aid in getting a vote on the Bourne bill. I most distinctly remember a ringing editorial in the Indianapolis *News* of June 14, headed "Prosperity of Country Merchants."

The Democrats had a majority of the House of the 62nd Congress — 1911–13. Champ Clark was Speaker. I had a nice sprinkling of subscribers in his district, which reached close to my main office. A man not nearly so good a politician as Clark would have been well aware of those subscribers. They were voters. I admired Clark very much as an able, honest, patriotic man. We disagreed on every public question that we ever discussed. Shortly after he was elected Speaker we had a little spirited correspondence. I am sure that he had the last word. Of course that was because I was so very busy — too busy to carry on a correspondence with as witty and clever and sarcastic a master of the written word as Champ Clark! I have only one letter of that correspondence. It reads as follows:

Speaker's Room, House of Representatives
Washington, D. C., May 21, 1911.

Hon. John M. Stahl,
Legislative Agent,
Chicago, Ill.

My dear Mr. Stahl:

I beg leave to state to you that no one is trying to fool you. The House of Representatives is busily engaged in redeeming the promises made to the people before the election. Of course it is easy for people to stand around and growl before anybody has a chance to do anything and if it is as hot in Chicago as it is in Washington I do not wonder that you are out of sorts.

Don't be too cock-sure about the Senate not passing any of the bills that the House will pass. The world moves and, while the Senate is perhaps the slowest part of it, it may move too. Why don't you jump on to the Republican Senators who are holding up everything and get them to get a move on themselves?

Your friend
Champ Clark

I did not approve of Clark or the House over which he was presiding in 1911, because of their stand on parcel post. The Democrats favored buying out the express companies, which I opposed. They favored other things which I opposed. But I did not doubt their honesty or patriotism. I was and am of opinion that the people of a Congressional district, except in those southern districts in which only a few are allowed to vote, get just the sort of Congressman the majority of them want and they are not entitled to sympathy if they do not vote and work to get a good Congressman and as a result get a bad one. The large majority of Congressmen wish to do, first, what is best for the people of their district; and, second, what is best for all the people of the United States. Their desires are patriotic, their purposes are good. But they often lack the information needed for wise legislation; they have so many errands to run for their constituents that they have no time to get informed. And Congressmen are continually subject to the efforts to mislead them of the shrewdest, most cunning people that money can send to Washington.

One of the members of the House at this time was Charles August Lindbergh, Representative from the sixth Minnesota district. He was a helpful friend of the parcel post. Fifteen years later his son landed in Paris with his own comb and brush, and also in the hearts of millions of Frenchmen and Americans. If you will look up the life history of Representative Lindbergh you will see that his son has mighty good breeding on both sides.

In the Post Office Appropriation Bill as it passed the House in 1912 there were provisions for a so-called parcel post. Whitaker, the president; John H. Kimble, the secretary; and Stahl, the legislative agent of the Farmers' National Congress, joined in a protest against this Section 8 of the bill. It appears in the Congressional Record of May 2, 1912. It was sent to more than 10,000 periodicals.

When the Post Office Appropriation Bill reached the Senate that body substituted the provisions of the Bourne bill, which provided for a complete general parcel post with eight zones. The bill had to go to conference, of course, and the House conferees agreed to the Bourne provisions. The conference report was signed by Jonathan Bourne, Boies Penrose, and J. H. Bankhead, for the Senate, and John A. Moon, D. E. Finley, and John W. Weeks for the House.

Although Congress, having spent the summer in the heat of Washington, was making every effort to adjourn the next day, which was Saturday, on the day the conference report was presented, which was August 23, it was vigorously debated in both Houses. The Bourne provisions were opposed in the Senate by Heyburn of Idaho, who contended that if the parcel post was not a failure the country store would have to go out of business. The Senate had heard that before. Senator Smith of Georgia inquired, "Is not the very difficulty to which you refer guarded against in this bill? A lower rate is furnished for the short distance carried by the rural carrier, a very low rate, and then from the neighboring larger town, 50 miles off, probably, a higher rate because of the transportation, and a still higher rate for 150 miles, and very much higher when reaching the big department stores in the great cities to which the Senator refers."

One of the very ablest speeches in favor of the Bourne provisions was by Senator Elihu Root. It was the favorite occupation of some farmer organizations and many *soi disant* farm leaders to say very unkind things about the able attorney of the steel trust and other big corporations. Strange, but the men that are most wise and quietly vigorous in their support of measures of benefit to the farmers and the other classes that compose the masses are generally in the Elihu Root class.

Another Senator who made an able speech in favor of the Bourne provisions was Bristow of Kansas — nearly always vigorously on the right side. He was once Fourth Assistant Postmaster-General and he conducted the investigation of the Cuban postal frauds and also the postal investigation during the Roosevelt administration. Of course he is not now in the Senate.

The *Congressional Record* has one short sentence on the action of the Senate:

> The report was agreed to.

The House took up the conference report at the night session of August 23. Moon, the chairman of the Committee on the Post Office and Post Roads, made a short explanation of the report. Only one member of the House discussed the report. Then a few minutes before 11 P.M., Friday, August 23, the House adopted the conference report.

The fight was won!

Early in the evening of August 23 Representative Murdock of Kansas had made the point of order of no quorum, on account of his opposition to an appropriation to pay a certain amount to the company that owned the Eads Bridge. He finally withheld his point of order to permit action on the conference report. After the adoption of that report he insisted on his point of order and a division of the House showed 164 present and 237 absent. It was well known that a majority of the members of the House had gone home and that it would be impossible to get a quorum. Murdock and others wished, for one thing, to show the extent of the evil of absenteeism and who were the absentees.

John W. Weeks was not one of the absentees. The record shows that he was in the House during the 23rd and he answered to his name on the roll call at 10:45 P.M. that date. He spoke in the House the 24th although he spent, properly, most of that day in his office.

I had been in Washington for several days. I thought I had never heard better debating in the Senate. Both sides spoke well. I give the palm to Senators Root and Bristow.

Agreement on the conference report and the passage of the Post Office appropriation bill were reported to each House by the other on the 24th; and the bill was on that day signed by the Speaker of the House and the President *pro tem* of the Senate.

Meeting Congressman Weeks on the afternoon of that day he mentioned that it was my birthday and said it would be a fitting end to my work if the President also signed the bill, making it, with the Bourne provisions, a law on that day. He said he would see that the President did sign the bill that day. He had so many things to think about I doubt if he thought of me again until just before he phoned me that night that the President had signed the bill, on my birthday. Of course President Taft never had the least inkling of what an important date he was linking up with the modern parcel post! But that bill was the only one he signed the 24th. Congress could not get through with its work that day and had to stay in hot Washington Monday, the 26th.

CONCLUDING NOTES

THAT the parcel post law could be improved in more than one particular I was certain. When I had been abroad I had investigated as well as I could the delivery mail system and the parcel post system of the countries I visited. I had kept well informed about those systems by correspondence with people I knew, postal officials, and others abroad, and by the reports of foreign governments. I knew that in 1912 nearly every European country, two in South America, and Japan, had an adequate parcel post, the rates of which were quite a little less than *one third* of those charged by our express companies for a similar, but incomplete, inadequate and inferior service. The parcel posts of other countries were liberal in their weight and bulk limits. The weight limit in Belgium was 132 pounds; Russia, 120 pounds; Germany, Switzerland, Hungary, Rumania, Luxembourg, Sweden and Norway, 110 pounds; and Austria, no limit. In Great Britain the weight limit was 11 pounds, but a satisfactory, liberal package express had been instituted by the railways which well supplemented the parcel post, and which charged fair rates.

In the law enacted August 24, 1912, the rates were too high and this was known, but they were the lowest that could be got through. The friends of the parcel post believed that the Postmaster-General of the next administration would reduce the rates if given that power; that he would thus respond to facts and arguments more readily than Congress, for in that body a small minority can often prevent action. This, of course, was the opinion of such men as Mann in the House and Bourne in the Senate and emphatically of Weeks. Hence the authority given in the law to the Postmaster-General along with the Interstate Commerce Commission to change rates and classifications. The zone system of the law was soon found to be unnecessarily and exasperatingly complicated. As had been anticipated, the Postmaster-General took action on both rates and zones.

The parcel post has been the victim of unfair action more than once since. It should render a much wider service than it is permitted to render and at less rates. *Its enemies have been quietly, shrewdly, constantly active; the people have been careless and negligent.* Eternal vigilance is the price of proper service rendered to the people by their government. Sometimes an honest official is led to take action that he did not foresee would have an effect detrimental to the people; and sometimes the public official is not near-sighted.

In my work for the public I bothered public officials as little as I well could. For that they were grateful; because of that they were disposed to consider my statements favorably and to help me when they could. A score of prominent Congressmen have said to me that they were wishing to see what I looked like; they heard of me frequently from their constituents and they got my stuff, but I never came to see them. I knew that they were very busy and that much of their time was taken by people who wanted only something for themselves and by even more people that had no idea that there were only twenty-four hours in a day for a Congressman. Once I said that to Senator Foraker, who had gone out of his way to do me a favor I had not asked of him and before I had ever met him; and his expression of appreciation of my notion that a Senator had something to do was in as vigorous, sustained English as I have ever heard. Those that knew him, and they only, can have an adequate idea of that Senatorial effort. Once I said about the same thing to Senator Aldrich and he replied in hearty, but more subdued, fashion. Both Senators were able, patriotic, misunderstood, abused men. Aldrich was one of the greatest men ever in the Senate. It was a real loss to him, and to his country, that he was not born and reared in Iowa.

From the time I called on Congressman Singleton in 1880, I was sure that the best way to get legislation was, not to bother a Congressman, especially with personal calls, but to get to him through his constituents. If you won any considerable number of the voters of his district to the audible point you were almost sure to get him. Hence during the years that I worked for legislation I could say that I was rarely seen but frequently cursed.

Even before the World War I could not make the trip to Washington and stay long enough to do anything effective for less than $150 and my expense might easily be $200. That last amount would put in the mails more than 3,000 honest-to-goodness letters to voters.

But some attention was paid to me. Of course I had the hostility of the express companies and that meant of the railways and certain other big corporations. I lost some nice advertising contracts because of my activity. I lost the good will of the mail order houses and that meant the loss of more advertising. The national association of farm machinery agents was bitterly opposed to a parcel post and on that account I lost the advertising of some manufacturers of farm machinery. I paid well for my advocacy of a modern parcel post. But I gained friends as I lost money. Apparently those friends soon forgot, but then it was easy for me to get rid of money.

One of the later amendments of the law merits special mention: that permitting the sending of articles C. O. D. It was secured by an old and valued friend of mine, Harry H. Charles, of New York City.

HELPFUL FRIENDS

I TAKE pleasure in testifying to the help of some silent, but most helpful friends.

In my campaign for a modern parcel post I used an agency that, if it was in existence during the early years of my campaign for mail delivery to farmers, I was not aware of it and therefore was guilty of an oversight I would not find it easy to excuse. I refer to well-organized and managed firms the business of which it is to get into the reading columns, as editorials, telegraphic dispatches, Washington or New York correspondence, cables, articles, etc., readable and instructive matter in which is concealed something in the nature of advertising or propaganda or an argument in favor of or against some proposition of public interest. This stuff is well written; it is good stuff — better than two thirds of the other stuff in the periodical. I never knew of one of these firms that would send out anything that it did not think was honest and for the public good. For obvious reasons these firms do not seek the limelight. One of them sent out for me to thousands of papers scores of short items, facts, figures, succinct arguments, in favor of parcel post, and they appeared as telegraphic dispatches from various points; editorials; Washington, New York or Chicago letters; even as foreign cables. I can not recall that this firm ever failed to send out anything that I handed it and it never charged a cent, although, of course, it regularly charges a stiff price for its service. The members of the firm believed that such a parcel post as I advocated would be for the public good.

Another efficient helper was my secretary for years, then Miss Josephine Proctor, now Mrs. Ernest C. Cole. I do not see how a secretary could be more intelligent or industrious than was Miss Proctor; and those that enjoy the modern parcel post and good roads are indebted to her for many a mighty good suggestion about the work that helped to get those things.

Another valuable helper was Mrs. Lillian Brewer, one of the best women that ever lived, and who did a great deal of the clerical work of my campaign for the parcel post. She stuck to this work during the last year of her life, when she was far from well. She was a woman of very wide information, of keen mind, and belonged to one of the old Massachusetts families. She was devoted to the cause of a modern parcel post and sometimes worked day after day without money compensation, knowing that anything paid her must come out of my pocket, for the financial help I got was only a fraction of my expense. " You are already doing too much at your own expense," she would maintain.

And my wife, always indeed a help meet for me, and much more, addressed envelopes, and folded and enclosed circulars and folders, and multigraphed letters day after day and week after week, for four years, glad to share in the work her husband was doing and to get for her work just what he got for his — nothing; except the knowledge that one was doing good work for the people, and work that was accomplishing the desired results. I fear that is only a small part of the work she has done for me with no greater substantial reward. But that is the lot of most wives and they seem to like it. At least my wife has never complained. However that may be, this is one case in which I have the last word.

CHAPTER XIII

FREE SILVER AND SOUND MONEY

DISCONTINUING THE COINAGE OF SILVER

I WAS for "sound money" and opposed to "the free and unlimited coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1" — generally shortened to "free silver" — in 1896. It meant as regards value stamped on the coin, 16 ounces of silver to 1 of gold.

The free and unlimited coinage of silver was discontinued by an Act of Congress passed in 1873. The Act was of such nature and was enacted in such a way that at the time only a few understood its purpose or its effect. The result of the Act was to make the volume of the currency much less than it would have been had the unlimited coinage of silver been continued. Credit can be safely extended to an amount several times the amount of the circulating medium. Making the volume of the currency less than it would have been otherwise reduced by much more the available credit, and that inevitably meant stiffer interest rates; all to the benefit of the capitalists and to the hurt of the borrowers. It was very hard, all but impossible, for the farmer with a small mortgage on his farm to meet interest payments and taxes in the 1870s after the severe panic of 1873. Times were difficult. The demonetization of silver made the crushing burden so much heavier that it was financially fatal to many honest, hard-working people.

Further, lessening the volume of currency increased the value of each dollar by increasing the demand for it and also increasing its purchasing power, hence the value of the bonds, mortgages, and other forms of indebtedness held by the creditor class was increased, while the debts of the debtor class were made greater. It was said that if the free and unlimited coinage of silver had been continued the cheapening of the dollar would have allowed the debtors to discharge their debts by paying with a less value than they had received. To this it was answered that on account of the resumption of specie payments the bond holders and money lenders had been enriched by many hundreds of millions of dollars and debts had been increased to such extent that this effect could not be equaled, much less exceeded, by any possible coinage of silver. The Act discontinuing the free and unlimited coinage of silver was more and more denounced as "the crime of '73." To those heavily in debt, especially the farmers who had mortgages on their farms, it certainly appeared to be a crime; and considering the manner of its commission, a cowardly, dastardly crime.

While I never felt as bitterly as some did about this "crime of '73" — at least, I never used such violent language — I was nevertheless of opinion in the 1890s and am to this day, that the Act discontinuing the free and unlimited coinage of silver was dishonest legislation much to the benefit of the few rich and the hurt of the many poor; much to the benefit of the creditor class and to the hurt of the debtor class. The Act was sneaking and iniquitous.

Rather often I have heard the people who have successfully worked to secure legislation like the Act demonetizing silver laugh heartily over their expensive drinks, as they recounted the steps taken by each — laugh about the resulting condition of the dear "Peepul." Once a Senator said to me, when I had expressed my opinion of those fellows, "Well, you can't help but like them — they have personality — and they have such a keen sense of humor." Howard Chandler Christie says the same of Mussolini. And I have no doubt that the man that did things in Syracuse and all his friends at the feast, save one, laughed heartily whenever the sword suspended by a hair was visibly swayed by the air current when the swinging door to the kitchen was put in motion.

There was little mirth in many homes, cabin and otherwise, in the United States for some years after the demonetization of silver and that Act was responsible for a share of the lack. The people in those homes lacked more than a sense of humor.

When, in 1896, the people were finally so aroused that some legislation about silver coinage could probably be enacted, I believed that we had gone so far on the road from the free and unlimited coinage of silver that to go back would be worse than to keep on with "the single standard of value." It was more than twenty years since the "crime of '73." Financial obligations and transactions were practically all on the basis of a monetary standard fixed, not by free silver, but by the discontinuance of the coinage of silver in 1873. To correct the "crime of '73" might prove to be a greater crime.

SOME CURRENCY PROPOSITIONS IN 1895

THAT sister Sarah who saves things has sent me a copy of *The Voice,* of New York City, the official organ of the W.C.T.U., and interested in many social and economic questions besides the abolition of the saloon. In its issue of February 7, 1895, it had a symposium on the currency proposal of ex-Secretary of the Treasury Windom, which was attracting much attention at that time. The symposium was by John M. Stahl, Secretary Farmers' National Congress and editor *Farmer's Call;* Richard P. Bland, M.C.; H. L. Loucks (most audible and prominent Populist); W. A. Peffer, U. S. Senator (and Populist); Michael D. Harter, M.C. (who had much to say on monetary topics); Laurence J. McParlin, Secretary National Committee, People's Party; John Franklin Crowell, Columbia College; Edward Atkinson; and Edward W. Bemis, University of Chicago — I give the names as they appear in the symposium, *not* beginning at the bottom, sir. The *Voice* asked replies to these questions:

> What serious objection, if any, do you see to a national currency made up exclusively of United States Treasury notes, upon a bullion basis, as proposed by ex-Secretary of the Treasury Windom?
>
> Would not such a currency be at once both safe and flexible, at the same time increasing immediately the per capita circulation and the available assets in the hands of the United States Treasurer?
>
> Are not both the "Baltimore plan," including the Carlisle and Springer substitutes, as well as free coinage of silver, open to the serious objection of being class legislation, the former being an especially dangerous form of such legislation, in that it places the issue and control of our currency in the hands of private corporations for purposes of private profit?

I leave it to my readers to learn about the Baltimore plan and the substitutes of the two prominent Congressmen, Carlisle of Kentucky and Springer of Illinois, promising that the currency discussions of the nineties will be found most interesting reading and kindly assuring them that no one can rightly claim to be well informed of the history of his country if he is ignorant of those discussions.

I am sure that he who reads of what was then proposed, in order to place "the issue and control of our currency largely in the hands of private corporations and individuals for purposes of private profit," will conclude that an idea for the benefit of the few rich is hard to kill and may be expected to be put into law in some form different from that first proposed but in effect the same; and in what was proposed in the early nineties will find some startling likenesses to features of the federal reserve system.

The Windom proposition was outlined in his annual report as Secretary of the Treasury in 1899 as follows:

> Issue treasury notes against deposits of silver bullion at market price of silver when deposited, payable on demand in such quantities of silver bullion as will equal in value, at the date of presentation, the number of dollars expressed on the face of the notes at the market

price of silver, or in gold at the option of the Government, or in silver dollars at the option of the holder. Repeal the compulsory features of the present coinage act.

What I have already written will indicate sufficiently my replies. They brought me a flood of letters, from which I got only proof that there are many men of many minds. The large majority of letters commended my replies; which is more than I would do now. The extreme "gold bugs" and the blatant free silverites both disagreed with me violently.

Bland was the leader of the free silver forces and wrote accordingly. He was entitled to the nomination for President by the Democrats on their free silver platform the next year. Loucks wanted the currency based on the national credit and nothing else back of it; and he wanted plenty of it. Senator Peffer thought that "if we are to measure silver by gold then there is no good and sufficient reason why we should use silver at all. We might as well use wheat, corn, or cotton." Harter was sure "the issuing of paper money and the redemption of it should be the work of banks." McParlin thought that "wheat is more essential to man than gold. The people are beginning to see that the world would be better off to absolutely demonetize both gold and silver." Crowell thought that "the only safe plan can be found only in a rival system of State banks and national banks under the control of Federal authority." Atkinson declared "it is not the function of Government to supply money; only to coin it. The business community should be allowed to supply instruments of credit surely redeemable in gold coin and nothing else." And Bemis had given the subject so little study he did not care to write on it.

He was the only wise one of the lot.

Up to 1896 the outstanding champions of free silver were Richard P. Bland, member of the House from Missouri, and William H. Harvey, resident of Chicago when he published "Coin's Financial School," a volume that had a phenomenal sale — more than 500,000 copies sold in six months. Bland was the abler, Harvey the more spectacular. Bland died in 1899. Harvey has resided for many years in Arkansas and is the author of several books in addition to the one named. When he published, June 1894, his "Coin's Financial School," it was speedily hailed by many as an unanswerable argument in favor of free silver.

Generally those who opposed free silver called themselves bimetallists. They stood with Jefferson. It will be recalled that when the first Congress took up the character and content of the dollar the members were confronted by Morris and Jefferson and their adherents, who thought that the dollar should be of so much silver; and by the Hamiltons, who thought it should be so much gold. Finally Hamilton, who was Secretary of the Treasury, made a report, a copy of which he sent to Jefferson, and Jefferson wrote him:

> I return you the report on the mint, which I have read over with a great deal of satisfaction. I concur with you, thinking that the unit must stand on both metals. And just principles will lead us to discard the legal proportions altogether, to inquire into the market price of gold in the several countries with which we shall be principally connected in commerce, and to take an average from them.

The "silverites" also proclaimed themselves bimetallists; in favor of the double standard. The anti-silverites claimed that if the mints were opened to the free and unlimited coinage of silver at the 16 to 1 ratio, silver being so abundantly produced that the silver in the dollar sold commercially for much less than the gold in the dollar, we would at once go on a one-standard basis, the standard being silver. They advocated a "monetary conference" with other nations, to fix the ratio of silver to gold in the metal dollar. At several of its annual meetings the Farmers' National Congress adopted a resolution in favor of an international monetary conference to adjust the ratio of silver and gold. This is as near as the Congress ever came to free silver. The Farmers' Alliance, the Farmers' Union, the Agricultural Wheel, the American Society of Equity, the Grange, and yet other farmers' organizations, were all for the free and unlimited coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1.

I never hesitated to discuss political questions in my own farm paper. I tried to be fair and honest and any subscriber that disagreed with me had the freedom of my columns if he wrote facts and sound arguments in a courteous way.

I think mine was the one farm paper in the United States that in 1896 was positively, aggressively against free silver. Because of this I did not receive nor did I wish to receive any financial consideration from any source. I wrote what I did and wrote it gladly because I believed that what I wrote was right. Of course I was paid for my articles by the reviews and other periodicals to which I sent them.

FARMERS AND FREE SILVER

I USED not only the columns of my own paper to oppose free silver, but I wrote against it for other periodicals: I prepared a long article about it which was circulated by the campaign committees (Republican and "sound money" Democrat) among farmers to the extent of 1,800,000 copies; and I had an article in the September 1896, *North American Review* and another in the October *Forum,* that were given a wide circulation by the daily and local papers quoting freely from them and praising or abusing the articles and the writer of them in their editorial columns.

The article in the *Forum* was one of four making a symposium. The other articles were by Benjamin Harrison, ex-President of the United States; John A. McCall, President of the New York Life Insurance Company; and Edward King, President of the Union Trust Company of New York City. My article in the *North American Review,* entitled, "Are the Farmers Populists?" was heartily praised by many of the advocates of the free coinage of silver that it opposed. At that time Major Moses P. Handy was, in the opinion of some, the most widely known newspaper man, and he said, in his editorial comment in the Chicago *Times-Herald,* that my article was "very able." The article attracted such wide and favorable attention that the editor of the *North American Review* wrote me a letter of hearty thanks and congratulations. He said that my article had given the country an entirely different, and doubtless a correct, idea of the farmer's stand on the currency issue.

During the Presidential campaign of 1896 the Republican National Committee had headquarters in the Auditorium Hotel, Chicago. Marcus A. Hanna, chairman of the committee, to gain the quiet and undisturbed sleep that he sorely needed at times, had (at least occasionally) a room in the Hampden Apartments, near my residence. At times he spent a night in this room and I have reason to believe that a few important conferences were held there. Apparently very few knew of this room, and for an obvious reason: Mr. Hanna had it to get away from the many always trying to see him and to be able, as he told me, "to think and rest." The first I knew of this room was the day after my article appeared in the *North American Review* and copies had reached Chicago. I was handed a note written in pencil by Mr. Hanna, sealed. It was a request to come to his room in the Hampden Apartments at eight o'clock that evening; and especially not to mention the note to anyone. The note located the room.

In the room at eight P.M. I found Mr. Hanna and no one else. He questioned me for more than an hour about the information on which I had based my article, and which said that the farmers were not Populists and were and always had been for "sound money." I finally convinced him that I knew what I was talking about. Surmising why he wished to see me, I had taken with me a mass of evidence I had collected, showing how the votes had been cast in purely agricultural counties and in industrial centers on "sound money," and especially when the "rag baby" or "greenback craze" was the issue in the late 1860s and the 1870s; and also showing that the Populist vote had never been cast in the agricultural States; that, for example, in Illinois ninety-five percent of the (always small) Populist vote had been cast, in every election, in Chicago and three or four manufacturing towns, like Moline; and that in Kansas, the most striking and abused example, the heavy Populist vote had always been in the cities and the small Populist vote in the agricultural districts. For an example, in 1890 when the Populist vote of the State was 36.31 percent of the whole, in Garfield County, purely agricultural, only *one* Populist vote was cast.

I had several hundred letters written to me by prominent simonpure farmers in the states where the sentiment for free silver was the strongest, showing that the free silver sentiment was among the town people rather than the farmers.

Some of the facts and figures which I submitted to Mr. Hanna I used later in my book, "The Real Farmer."

Shortly after nine P.M. Mr. Hanna exclaimed, "You have enough, my boy! You have the goods! I'll sleep better tonight than I have for three months!" When I met him that evening his broad face was clouded. He looked worried. I learned later that some of his counsellors and assistants had told him that Stahl was crazy; did not know what he was talking about; and something had to be done to get the farmers to vote right — but no one knew what would induce the farmers to forsake free silver. These associates of Mr. Hanna pointed out to him that the Alliance, the Agricultural Wheel, the Farmers' Union, and, loudest of all, the Grange, were all for free silver. Of course the Grange was proclaiming, "We are the people," and as I have shown in another chapter, it had been "resoluting" hard for free silver year after year. At eight P.M. of the day on which I had the interview with Hanna he feared that the Republicans might be defeated in November by the votes of the farmers. Before ten P.M. he thought otherwise. Although I had shown him that in Illinois, for example, the Populist vote had been cast by the workingmen, he was sure that among the workingmen there was such a hearty feeling for McKinley that it would overcome any free silver or Populist leaning. He believed that generally that was true of the other classes that I had shown him had certainly cast the Populist vote and who were probably for free silver. If only the farmers would vote for McKinley, if they were not for free silver, the election of McKinley was sure. I had shown him by figures and letters that they would vote for the Republican candidate. Hanna had a large, broad face. I have seen a stern expression on it. I have seen it very serious. But when he exclaimed, "You have enough, my boy!" it shone. It showed happiness, and more. His eyes more than shone; they glowed. Mark Hanna was a very happy man. To him William McKinley was more than a lesser god and the Republican platform was as the Faith of the Fathers.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN

I HAD heard of William J. Bryan when he was a young lawyer and nothing more. He was then a resident of Jacksonville, Illinois. My headquarters and office were in Quincy. A good many Quincy people attended one or the other of the two colleges at Jacksonville. Quincy people married Jacksonville people. There was much visiting back and forth. Some people of my acquaintance mentioned occasionally the young lawyer, Bill Bryan, who had made such a brilliant record at Illinois College. But then, said the Southerners, his father was a Virginian, "from Culpepper County, sah, and a jedge." Across the hall from my offices in Quincy were the offices of two lawyers who knew Bill Bryan well. They believed that he had the brains and the "nerve" to be successful in Chicago and did not approve of it when he went to Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1887. The stream of life in Quincy was not the rushing torrent it was in New York or Chicago; we business and professional men sat around a good deal in each other's offices, gossiping. One day I was in the office across the hall, talking to Judge Thompson, in whose office I had been a very short time when I read law, when the younger lawyer associated with him, John Broady, afterwards a judge, returned from a trip to Nebraska. He told us that Bill Bryan was doing well in Nebraska. Did a lot of public speaking; looked like he might be a judge some day and there was actually talk about nominating him for Congress the next year. "Anybody but Bill mention that talk?" asked Judge Thompson, dryly. He knew Bill well. He had come from Mt. Sterling, which is over Jacksonville way. Broady was sure that other people had mentioned this talk to him, but could not remember who any of the other people were. "Bill always gives you the impression that several people have been talking," said Judge Thompson. He liked Bryan; admired him; but he knew Bill. I met Bryan in Washington three or four times while he was a member of Congress. Always he inquired about his Quincy friends. I do not think that he ever forgot anyone who had been his friend. I thought that he got on the wrong side of every question about which he expressed an opinion in Congress; I think so yet. Of course, knowing him slightly, I kept some track of him, and I must confess that I would not have shed tears if he and not Thurston had been elected Senator.

I knew a good many of the delegates to the Democratic national convention of 1896. I knew many of those attracted to Chicago by the convention. It is remarkable how many farmers have cattle or hogs ready to ship or business or professional men have urgent business in Chicago, just at such a time. I had a season ticket to the convention, which was in the ramshackle, enormous "Coliseum" on Sixty-third Street. I went to one session and was bored. The evening of that day, as I remember it, some friends insisted that I go the rounds of the hotels and see what "big chiefs" were to be admired. At a rather inferior hotel we found a bunch of Nebraskans, some of whom I knew. Someone asked about Bill Bryan and was told that he had gone to his room. If there was any mention of nominating him for President I did not hear it. The next day I went to the convention to hear David B. Hill and William F. Vilas. I heard them and "Pitchfork" Ben Tillman as well as most of the audience could hear them and I did hear Bill Bryan. He made that "Cross of Gold" speech — the most dramatic and eloquent speech I have ever heard. I have heard a great deal of oratory, but it is the only speech I ever heard that deserved to be said of it that it "electrified the audience." And it was an audience not easy to electrify. It numbered fifteen thousand. The greater number were accustomed to oratory. Also it was an audience wearied by the accursed acoustics of the big building. It was not possible except to the few to hear some of the speakers before Bryan. I was seated well back, as I wished to be in a position to leave quietly should the proceedings become tiresome. I heard distinctly every word Bryan spoke and I am sure that every person in the large building, unless stone deaf, heard him. My first thought was, "Well, here is a Voice." It was clear, distinct, musical. When he had finished I did not think that he had made a great speech so far as thought enters into such a speech, but I was sure that I had heard an orator who would be famous as such, that I had heard a man who knew how to appeal to the crowd, and that I had heard an honest man very much in earnest who had thought with sincerity if not with depth. I was somewhat surprised that the speech had so great an effect on the audience — an audience composed largely of politicians more or less case-hardened. Then I reflected that they were weary of the periods of men whose earnestness and perhaps sincerity were open to question and of men who had spoken without the force and fire of deep conviction and intense feeling. It was not the thought, it was not the words, it was the complete loss of the speaker in his earnestness and his unquestionable sincerity and devotion to the right, as he saw it, in behalf of the people, that moved his audience to the very depths of mind and soul.

I went home thinking, "Bill Bryan will be Senator yet and the people will know him from Frisco to Boston." I am a poor prophet; in fact no prophet at all. I did not have any thought that Bill Bryan would be nominated for the Presidency by that convention, although I overheard several say the speech would nominate him.

While I was listening to his great speech I was amused by this: He wore a long coat that did not fit any too well. His trousers needed to be pressed. They were quite roomy in the legs. Several times when he most earnestly emphasized a telling point he flexed each leg outward; then he would straighten them, bobbing up and down as he did this. It was an amusing gesture. Of course he was altogether unconscious of it, he was in such dead earnest. And such was his power over his audience that while I have mentioned this gesture to perhaps thirty people that heard the address, only six remembered it, and only one had at the time noticed it as I did. Of course nearly all of his many gestures were beyond criticism. I think he had carefully studied them out and had used them on the chautauqua platform and elsewhere until their use had become automatic. But half a dozen times he was carried away by his earnestness — and then came those odd leg movements. It is well known that nearly every phrase in that speech he had been using on the platform. He had used that famous concluding sentence a dozen times. It was a wonderful speech by a man whose greatness was most in his earnestness and who was wrong oftener than he was right on public questions; a speech so great that if he had turned a somersault into the Illinois delegation no one would have laughed and Altgeld would have waved the state's banner while Bryan never missed a word.

CAMPAIGN ABUSE

I DOUBT if any other candidate has been as mercilessly abused as was Bryan during the 1896 campaign. Lincoln was more brutally treated. Yet his nomination had made

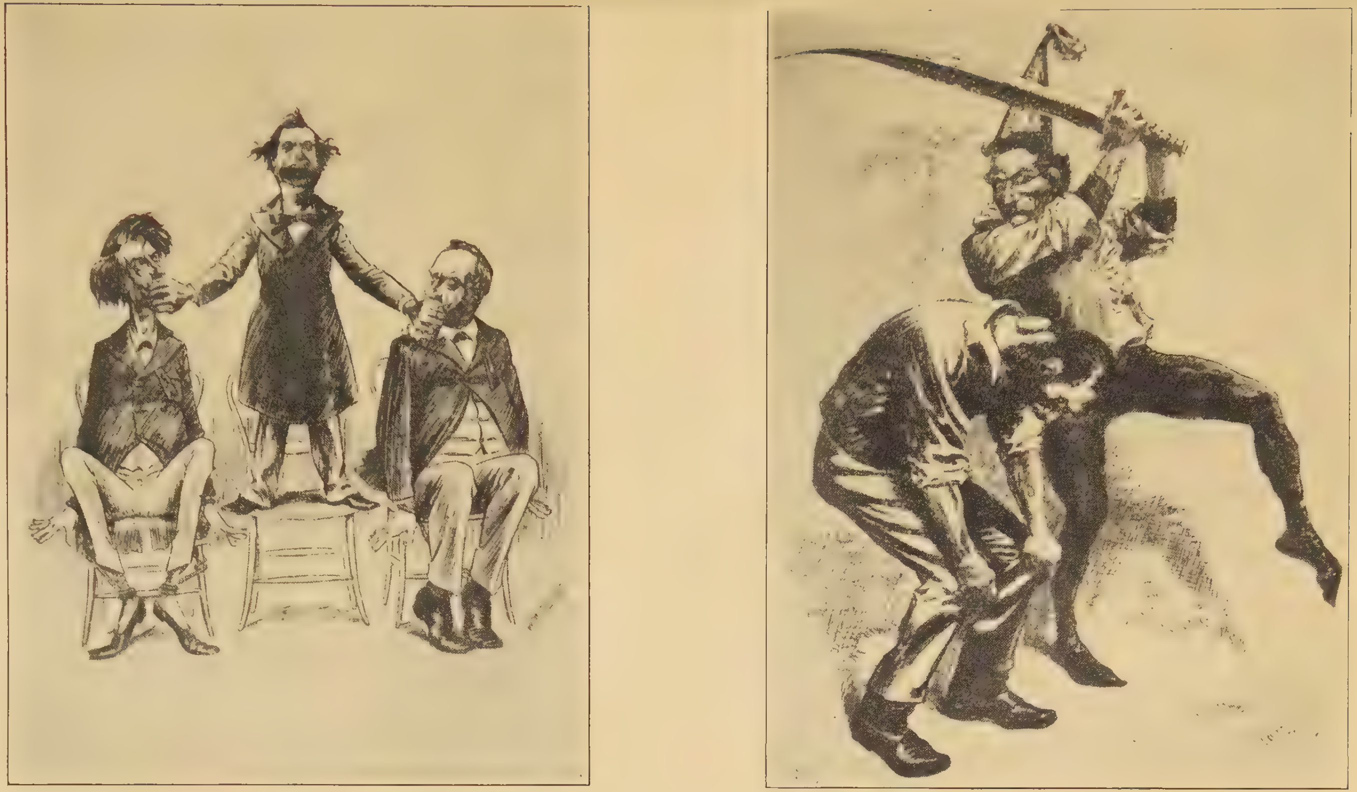
Bryan the Bryan subdued, adroit, conservative, so much so that when he made his New York City speech, his second speech of the campaign, a Republican New York paper published a cartoon entitled " A False Alarm." In the cartoon Bryan was represented as a boy reading a roll of manuscript and Father Knickerbocker was complacently returning home, with his fire extinguisher under his arm. Another New York paper, the *Nation,* said his audience found him transformed into a " Professor Dryasdust posing through two mortal hours." The historian Rhodes has set it down that "New York and other Eastern financial centers breathed a sigh of relief." Bryan could play the politician consummately on occasion. He wanted very much to be President.

He read his New York speech from manuscript. Yes, William Jennings Bryan actually did that!

He was subdued throughout the campaign. It was those that opposed him, and for some reason many hated him, who were guilty of the abuse. The Rev. Thomas Dixon, called a minister of the gospel of Christ, spoke of Bryan as " a mouthing, slobbering demagogue whose patriotism is all in his jaw-bone." The New York *World* reported that when Rev. Dixon's audience heard this, they "howled." Rev. C. H. Parkhurst, another New York minister not unknown to wide notoriety, declared the silver movement to be inimical to credit and an attempt, " deliberate and hot-blooded, to destroy what little of it remains. I dare, in God's pulpit, to brand such attempts as accursed and treasonable." Of the New York papers the *Nation* was the most dignified, reserved, most detached from partisanship, and it said, " probably no man in civil life has succeeded in inspiring so much terror without taking human life," referring temperately to Bryan. The New York *Sun,* of course, perpetrated a " classic." It said: " He was born eloquent and attracted much attention by repeating ' Casabianca ' when he was eleven months old. He is not much older now, but much more eloquent; and his eloquence is of the inspired sort, like that of a phonograph or telephone or speaking-tube. Whenever he opens his lips words begin to fly out, Roman candles, cannon crackers, rockets, pinwheels. A very beautiful show, but as the Honorable Tobias Castor says, 'What's it all about, the Lord only knows.'" A youngish man, then president of the New York Police Board, named Theodore Roosevelt, was of opinion that Bryan and those that thought as he did, "are, as regards the essential principles of government, in hearty sympathy with their remote skin-clad ancestors who lived in caves and fought one another with stone-headed axes and ate the mammoth woolly rhinoceros." Henry Watterson, of some renown as an editor, wrote that "Mr. William J. Bryan has come to Kentucky, and Kentuckians have taken his measure. He is a boy orator. He is a dishonest dodger. He is a daring adventurer. He is a political faker. He is not of the material of which the United States have ever made a President, nor is he even of the material of which any party ever before made a candidate."

Bryan's friends called him "Bryan the Brave," "The Peerless One," "The Great Commoner," "The Magnet of the Platte," "The Peerless Leader." His enemies used these names also, in derision. And they called him, as did a few of his friends, "The Boy Orator of the Platte." It was this which led Senator J. B. Foraker to place the cap sheaf — for once he beat John J. Ingalls to it. He said, commenting on "The Boy Orator of the Platte," and referring to the river, "Yes, six inches deep and six miles wide at the mouth." That was more than brutal; it was wit with an element of truth.

My articles in the *North American Review* and the *Forum,* my editorials in my farm paper, and articles that went into the "patent insides," and the "page" in which I opposed free silver sent out by the campaign committees, combined to bring me many letters and notices. The large majority of the letters commended me, but those that condemned me were the most vigorous and enjoyable. The free



TWO CARTOONS OF THE 1896 CAMPAIGN

As the boy orator would have it
(From *The Press*, New York)

Bryan to Workingman: "Now, my good man, I propose to cut your dollar in two without hurting you a particle." (From *Harper's Weekly*)

silverites knew how to use the English language and they did not spare adjectives and epithets. I like the fellow that tells you what he thinks and is sure he is right and if it is contrary to what you think says what he thinks as vigorously as he can. I was sent several newspaper notices that referred to me as Judas M. Stahl. Another kindly renamed me J. Microbe Stahl. But I observed that almost never was I censured by honest-to-goodness farmers. It was the Democratic politician, and generally of the smallest caliber, who abused me. As I had aligned myself with the Republicans and of a fact appeared as a Republican partisan, I had no right to complain if the Democrats spoke their minds freely, sometimes using language more forcible than elegant.

It really took courage for me to advocate "sound money" and oppose "free silver" from the time it became a live issue, which was several years before 1896. All my interests were with the Midland farmers and dependent on those farmers. I was editor and owner of a leading farm paper, and it had many subscribers in the state of the messiah of free silver, Richard P. Bland. Among my closest friends were almost a majority who sincerely, vehemently believed in free silver — some all but replaced the Holy Bible with "Coin's Financial School" at family worship, and I would not have been much surprised to hear them pray, "Give us this day our daily bread and this year free silver." Until the middle of the 1896 campaign was passed the majority were of the opinion that low tariff, free silver, and Bryan would win.

Only those that have lived through the 1890s or that make a very thorough study of conditions can understand the tense, bitter feeling. The panic of 1893 was a very severe one. Many were ruined. Millions lacked employment. I know of one family of four that lived on nine dollars a week and were thankful. In Chicago I saw a line of men nearly two blocks long as it slowly passed through a soup house to get a bowl of soup for each outstretched right hand. Such a line could be seen almost every day. Some of the men I knew well had no money for sorely needed clothes; and their wives cut up old clothes and in some miraculous way made new ones. Farmers were very poor. I sold as good wheat as was ever grown in Illinois for 56 cents a bushel. I did not sell, I fed, corn, but it was bringing only 18 to 20 cents a bushel when hauled to the railway station in Illinois and I would better have sold it, so low was the price of fat hogs. The only one of my friends that did not suffer because of the panic was one who had bought a big tract of Kankakee marsh land to drain and would have lost money had it not been that he could get all the able-bodied men he wanted to work well for board and lodging and fifty cents a day of twelve hours. There was a little recovery from the panic by 1896, but very little: millions were yet ill clad, often hungry, desperate. The field was ripe for the apostles of free silver, cheaper money, greenbacks on the faith of the nation, no protection for big industries, two percent loans to the farmer by the national government; and even for the "anarchists," like John P. Altgeld, as well as such men as Bryan and Bland.

It was in 1894 that Coxey's Army marched from the Northwest to Washington. It was one of the most significant as well as interesting events of our history.

And I, who had written regularly for years for the *Kansas Farmer,* edited by William A. Peffer, and for the *New England Farmer* of Boston, and for the *Southern Cultivator* of Atlanta, and for the *Texas Farm and Ranch* of Dallas, and for eighteen other farm papers; who had his warmest friends in the Midland and the West, where the sentiment for free silver and the hatred of gold and wealth were yet stronger than in the South: I turned traitor, deserted the Cause and its friends, and allied myself with the hated rich of New York and the oppressors who fattened and gloated in Wall Street; I was as weak as Peter and as false as Judas!

I tried to think otherwise about the free and unlimited coinage of silver and about unlimited paper money and two percent loans and sub-treasuries. I could not. If those that abused me had known of my sleepless nights, if they had known how well I could and how well I did sympathize with them, they would have spared me some of their bitterest letters.

The 1896 campaign confirmed what my work for the delivery of mail to farmers had well taught me: *Never waste a moment in grieving about, and most emphatically never waste a moment in answering, criticisms.* One critic can keep a hundred men busy in making answer to his criticisms. The man with enough vigor to do things will, if wise, regard criticism as the sincerest praise.

Of course I got much commendation — more editorials praised than condemned me. I think, of all the commendatory editorials, I prized most a very long one in the Norwich (Conn.) *Bulletin* of September 11, 1896. It was sent me by a Vermont friend, and, dear reader, a friend of the Green Mountain State is a friend indeed. The *Bulletin* headed its editorial "Farmers Men of Sense." That pleased me, for I was always for the farmer. Because of that I will give three sentences from my address at the meeting of the Illinois Republican Editorial Association in 1896; and also because those sentences state a historical fact apparently forgotten, but which should be well remembered in justice to the farmer:

> Our economic authorities agree that it was the wide expansion of our wheat production, due to the invention of the self-binder, that permitted us to resume specie payments. The hundreds of millions of bushels of wheat sent abroad brought into our coffers the needed gold. The farmer, who thus did so much to put our currency and our national credit on a basis inferior to none in the world, furnishes seven-eighths of our exports, and these exports command gold, a currency as good as the best, in the foreign markets.

Among my acquaintances were a good many who spoke or wrote for the Republicans during the 1896 campaign and were well paid by this or that committee. Let this at least be said for me: I did what I did, not for financial gain, but because I could not get myself to think otherwise. I could not believe other than that I was talking and writing for that which would be best for all the people of the United States.

I MIGHT HAVE BEEN A CONSUL!

When I told my partner about the interview with Hon. Mark Hanna at the Hampden Apartments, he said, "You can get from Mac and Hanna about any office you want when Mac is elected." I had not thought of office. I had never wanted a public office. I saw Mr. Hanna only three times after that interview. Some time after McKinley's election I met him in Washington. He knew that I was a bachelor and that I loved France and the people from whom had come my mother. As he shook hands with me he said, "If you want a good consular job in France, I think it can be arranged — not Paris, of course — there are two or three big plums in a small basket that you can not have — but you know what to select — pick out what you want here and ask me for it and I'll get it for you if I can."

At that time some consulships were considered to be big plums financially.

I never asked for anything. I probably would not have been able to get anything worth while. My business was worth something even in 1896. I believed that under a Republican administration I could make it worth more. And I had met a little Chicago girl with appealing ways that made that city too interesting to me to think of a job in Washington or anywhere in France.

Some time after this meeting with Hanna his offer of a job in France or Washington was mentioned to me by a good friend of mine who knew Hanna well indeed. Hanna must have told him of the offer. Certainly I had not told anyone. When he found that I had not asked for anything and did not intend to ask for anything, he told me to my face that I was "a damned fool." And he did not smile when he said it. He was thoroughly provoked. But I knew that was due to his warm friendship for me. He wanted me to do something for myself, and the only thing he thought worth while. He damned me as a fool in all kindness! He always managed to have a political job. To him that was the only proper way for a man of my alleged brains to live. He has a good job in one of the Departments in Washington now. The fact that a worse choice for that particular place could not possibly have been made adds much to his enjoyment of his position. If he ever reads this he will have need to credit me with a hearty laugh. Perhaps two of them.

I did not get an office. But I have never regretted the stand I took about the free and unlimited coinage of silver at the ratio of 16 to 1 in 1896.

It would appear that the creditor class will soon be seeking, however, some metal more precious than gold by which to measure the dollars their debtors must pay. December 26, 1928, Carl Snyder, addressing in Chicago a great gathering of " savants in ten learned societies," noted that the number of millionaires in the United States had been multiplied by seven during the preceding fourteen years; and said he, " possibly half or more of these millionaires have been created by the violent debasement in the value of the currency which has taken place since the beginning of the World War." Apparently the learned savants (savants being supposed to be learned) accepted Mr. Snyder's assertion as the truth, he being " of the American Statistical Association." At any rate, no one disputed his assertion. On December 23, 1928, was published in daily papers throughout the country an Associated Press dispatch from London, having in big type this heading:

VALUE FLUCTUATIONS OF GOLD
BIG PROBLEM

And the dispatch was to the effect that " gold has fluctuated in value " and was no longer a safe basis of " the towering superstructure of commerce and credit " and therefore

English financiers are looking to the United States for help in solving the problem. The Federal Reserve has been credited in London with trying to prevent undue fluctuation in prices and with letting the big supplies of gold in the United States flow back to other countries, so that the gold standard may be established on a firm foundation throughout the world.

The League of Nations also has taken up the problem by requesting its finance committee " to consider to what extent and in what way the League of Nations could most usefully assist in the study and the solution of the problem of undue fluctuation of the purchasing power of gold."

And much more. Can it be possible that the golden god Bryan and his hosts would not worship, had worse than feet of clay?

CHAPTER XIV

ELECTION OF SENATORS — PURE FOOD LAWS — TARIFF COMMISSION — RECIPROCITY

ELECTION OF UNITED STATES SENATORS

MY GOOD neighbor, Robert McCuen, sometimes speaks of a person "messing in many things." I fear that accusation could be brought justly against me. I am sure that every voter should be interested, as intelligently as he well can, in all important public questions. Some of the things about which I have been concerned should have the serious thought of all citizens. They are live questions. I will write about four of them.

On not many occasions in the history of the United States has Congress taken as important action as it did in May 1912, when it submitted to the State legislatures the amendment to the Constitution for the direct election of Senators.

That amendment proposed that after a century and a quarter the provision of the Constitution which was the result of so much heated debate in the convention that framed the Constitution and which was thought to be of such fundamental and paramount importance, should be abrogated.

Any change in our national Constitution is momentous, but surely not many changes could be made of as far reaching import or historical interest as this change which put to an end that method of selecting Senators which was the most significant reminder of the sharp difference of opinion among our forefathers — a division which more than once threatened to wreck the national government.

I have a long paper I prepared in 1885, to be read to a critical assemblage in St. Louis. It was an argument for the direct election of Senators. I prepared the paper with much care and enjoyed the work, for I have not found the history of our country of any other period so interesting and instructive as that of the few years preceding the formulation of the Constitution. The men that debated our Constitution were able, deeply thoughtful men thoroughly familiar with what had been thought and said about Government from the beginning of the earliest records. I doubt if any other period of our history can be studied with as great profit.

Year after year the Farmers' National Congress adopted a resolution in favor of the direct election of Senators. Always I supported and voted for this resolution. The scandals in connection with the election of Senators by State legislatures were the best possible arguments in favor of some change in the method of electing Senators. One such scandal could be confidently counted on every two years; generally there were several of these scandals every two years. I was heartily for the measure that would take the election of Senators out of the legislatures and put it in the direct action of the voters.

In 1912 the Senate added certain amendments to the joint resolution to change the method of electing Senators as it had passed the House. These amendments, known as the Bristow amendments, were so obnoxious to the South that it was declared by Congressmen and others that the resolution with these amendments would never pass the House; and Senators and others declared as emphatically that without the amendments the resolution would never pass the Senate. The dispatches from Washington agreed that the resolution would fail.

The final vote on the resolution in the House was fixed by special rule for May 13, 1912. Each side was to have three hours for debate. The resolution was in charge of Congressman Rucker, of Missouri — an able, patriotic man and Chairman of the House Committee on Elections.

I have before me an account of the action of the House that day which states that as Congressman Rucker arose to open the debate the House became still; and that all were surprised when he sent to the Clerk's desk and asked to have read by the Clerk of the House a letter from a private citizen. This is the letter as it appears in the *Congressional Record:*

Hon. William Rucker
The House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

The Farmers' National Congress, which for more than twenty years has advocated the direct election of United States Senators, is indeed gratified to observe that the joint resolution bearing on this reform may receive the sanction of both Houses, and largely because of the conciliatory attitude of the House. This confirms the opinion we have always entertained and expressed that the Congress of the United States is a remarkably high-minded, honorable, and patriotic body, earnestly desiring to do that which will be for the public welfare and ready to surrender small differences of opinion to gain real progress and reform.

We most earnestly hope that when the joint resolution above referred to comes to a vote in the House that it will receive a large favorable vote, making such a large majority in its favor as will carry much weight to state legislatures.

The farmers of the United States are watching with much interest the course of the two Houses of Congress on this and other measures, and will note with interest the votes of individual members of Congress.

I most earnestly ask you to use a moment of the precious time of the House to communicate to it the very earnest wish of the farmers of the United States, as expressed through the Farmers' National Congress, for the direct election of Senators, coupled with our very high opinion of the Congress of the United States and belief in its sincerity, ability, and patriotism.

I have the honor to be

Very Respectfully Yours,
John M. Stahl

As the account I have mentioned states, it is rare that a communication from a private citizen is read from the

Clerk's desk; and the account says further that the letter made a marked impression. In an editorial about this letter the New Orleans *Picayune* said that "the reading of this communication from the Legislative Agent of the Farmers' National Congress on the day of the final debate is accepted by the members of that organization as a compliment worthy of notice." It was the only organization named in the debate that day.

I think this part of my public activity would better never have come to pass. The direct election of United States Senators is a mistake. The election of Senators is really farther from the control of the people than it was before. The expense of the primary elections are no small addition to the tax burden of the people. The expenses of the candidates in the campaign for nomination and election, have been multiplied. The tendency is to limit the nominations to men of wealth or those that will put themselves under criminal obligation to procure funds considered necessary to success. Certainly the personnel of the Senate has not been improved. The Senate has been made more like the House. It was the wise view of the fathers that formulated the Constitution that the House and the Senate should have characteristics and in time traditions peculiar to each that would make one to balance the other. The men that framed the Constitution of the United States were men of very unusual, it might be said of superhuman, wisdom. They produced a wonderful charter for a Republic; a Constitution that has not always been improved by tinkering. That Constitution should have our veneration; and we should regard it with that aversion to change that must come from a right appreciation of its merits.

PURE FOOD LEGISLATION

DURING the first dozen years of this century there was grievous need of the enforcement of pure food and drug laws. To this could be added the need of a few more such laws, more specific, and naming more severe penalties for their violation. I hesitate to say that at any time or for any purpose more laws were needed, for nearly always, if not always, when evils have continued when enforced laws would have ended them the fault has been too many laws. Multiplying laws breeds that indifference to and even contempt of law which nullifies laws.

Recently I spent some days digging into the *Congressional Record* of the 1890s, and the charges of food adulteration made against prominent corporations by members of Congress in the debates in both the House and the Senate are simply astounding; and these charges were never disproved; in fact, they were never seriously disputed. In my work for pure food laws and then for their enforcement I was associated with two influential national organizations, of which I will write later: the Farmers' National Congress and the National Civic Federation. It was the last named that formed in 1914 a commission to work for food and drug control to the end that adulteration and fraud should be greatly reduced, if they could not be got rid of altogether. In the issue of its monthly official organ, the *Record,* for March 1914, a page is devoted to the Pure Food Commission it had just named, and its proposed work. This page is adorned with pictures of Vincent Astor, chairman; Carl L. Alsberg, Chief Bureau of Chemistry, Department of Agriculture; Samuel Gompers; S. S. Goldwater, M. D., Commissioner of Health of the City of New York; and John M. Stahl. Other members of the commission were: J. H. Wallis, President National Association of State Food and Dairy Commissioners; Miss Maude Wetmore, Chairman Woman's Department, National Civic Federation; Mrs. S. R. Crockett, Chairman Food and Drug Department General Federation of Woman's Clubs; and Dr. E. K. Dunham, Chairman New York Milk Commission.

While the commission appointed by the National Civic Federation had gratifying newspaper support, I fear that it accomplished only a little of that which it was hoped it would accomplish. It had scarcely started in its work when untoward events hindered and threatened. The World War claimed attention away from such things before the United States entered the War. And the very fact that the commission was named and proposed to be offensively active and even disposed to prosecute flagrant law-breakers, apparently removed a goodly portion of the cause of its being.

Year after year the Farmers' National Congress adopted resolutions in favor of more stringent pure food and drug laws, and the better enforcement of all laws. I must take my full share of the responsibility for those resolutions. We coupled with them resolutions in favor of the teaching of domestic science and condemning short weights in the sale of foods to the consumer. I must take much of the responsibility for the resolutions about domestic science. I was an officer of the National Domestic Science Association, which led in the campaign for the teaching of domestic science. Here is a sample resolution:

"Whereas, the ultimate object of agriculture is the production of food for mankind;

"Resolved, that the object fails in the most essential point if the food which is produced with skill is ruined in preparation through ignorance."

The resolutions declared the Congress in favor of "the things necessary to discover, demonstrate, and teach in state colleges and at state agricultural fairs and institutes throughout the nation the best methods and appliances for the preparation of food in connection with the best methods and appliances for its production."

The evil of short weights is now greater than it was in the years when the Farmers' National Congress and the National Civic Federation vigorously contended for honesty as to both quality and quantity of foods and drugs. Perhaps you have read of the investigations of the gasoline filling stations in some large cities; in Chicago, for one. The chances are against your getting full measure at many stations. And have you observed how nicely and quickly the agitation about short-measure filling stations is allowed to die? There are more kinds than one of hold-ups in filling stations and in no case is the public the gainer. A friend of mine who is an expert on oils, tells me that many of the filling stations sell the tourist an oil not as good as that they profess to sell. Yet one would much better be cheated in gasoline and oil than be poisoned by impure food and adulterated drugs. It does seem that the meanest and most persistent of criminals are those that in order to cheat also poison in the sale of foods and medicines. Have you shown any interest in the enforcement of the pure food and drug laws?

TARIFF COMMISSION

I AM of opinion that the tariff commission should be continually a subject of live interest as long as we have such a commission. Further, I think something along the lines of what I said when a tariff commission was yet a subject of debate should be kept in mind when the tariff commission is discussed; should be kept in mind by all other sections of the masses as well as the farmers.

I was earnestly in favor of a tariff commission *properly constituted.* Once I journeyed to Washington, of course at my own expense — I mention this because so many had their expenses paid by parties much in interest — to make one of the formal addresses at what was considered the most important meeting during the campaign for a tariff commission. It was by no means the first time I had spoken in favor of such a commission. The meeting in Washington was the "National Convention of the National Tariff Commission Association," and was held in the Columbia Theatre, January 11 and 12, 1911. Governor Deneen sent me a very handsome commission to represent the State of Illinois at this convention, but I went rather as the only representative of the Farmers' National Congress. The speakers were the President of the United States; John Candler

Cobb, president of the National Tariff Commission Association; Henry C. Emery, chairman of the Tariff Board; H. E. Miles, chairman executive committee, National Tariff Commission Association; Albert J. Beveridge, U. S. Senator; Samuel W. McCall, M. C.; Allan Ripley Foots, president International Tax Association; Jacob Gould Schurman, president Cornell University; Irvine L. Root, M. C.; James T. Burke, M. C.; John Kirby, president National Association of Manufacturers; Albert B. Cummins, U. S. Senator; Henry Cabot Lodge, U. S. Senator; Francis G. Newland, U. S. Senator; Nicholas Longworth, M. C.; John Barrett, Director General Pan American Union; and John M. Stahl, Farmer. On the program I was between a Senator and the university president. Being put among men having an international fame as economists, diplomats, legislators, and statesmen, I was fearful of the effort of a farmer until I was reassured by hearty applause; led by big-hearted Marcus M. Marks, of Brooklyn, and some friends of his.

I quote a part of the long report of my address in the Washington *Star:*

> As tariffs have been framed, inevitably the interests of the majority of our people have not been fairly considered. The big industries controlled by a few, the few organizations possessing vast capital, the highly centralized industries, could have and have had their interests presented to the Ways and Means Committee of the House and the Finance Committee of the Senate by the shrewdest and ablest men and the most compelling talkers. And, further, this concentrated minority could have and has had its adroit and persuasive agents to influence the Members of Congress.
>
> But the millions that constitute our plain, common people, scattered, unorganized, not even cohesive, their capital widely and thinly diffused, and that are the large majority, could not be and therefore have not been effectively heard. This great Unheard Majority, of which the farmers are the most considerable class, are the ones whose interests demand a tariff commission composed of men of the greatest ability, firmness, and fidelity. Such a commission would have the time and disposition to give ear to all classes and all industries. . . .
>
> We farmers are well aware that the good or ill of a tariff commission will depend on the attainments, character, and purposes of the

men that compose it. The commission may be an aid in the making of a tariff that is demanded by good financial policy and the welfare of all classes or it may be an aid to fasten more securely inequality and injustice. We farmers have not passed unnoticed the special activities of the present tariff board. Farmers have the intelligence to note that wood pulp, and not lumber, cotton goods, chemical, steel, or rubber schedules were the first investigated. Farmers have not failed to note recent significant conversions to the cause of a tariff commission.

I am sure that I should give space to the foregoing, for the work and the influence of the Tariff Commission have not had nearly the alert attention of the people that they should have. We advocates of a tariff commission contemplated one to make recommendations to Congress, not to the President; and we did not advocate transferring to the President the power to change duties. The Constitution was framed by able men after long discussion. They were certain that the powers of the three branches of the national government should be distinctly defined and strictly limited. It is not to the interest of a well-balanced government, or of the best government, to confound those powers, or take them from one branch to give them to another. This is especially true of the levying of taxes.

I am well aware that the arguments I was using about that time in favor of giving the Postmaster-General and the Interstate Commerce Commission power to change the Parcel Post law when enacted, might be used in favor of giving the President power to change import duties; but I do not think the two cases are parallel; that one warrants the other.

My address attracted wide attention. At this time I had access to the clippings about it because of the generosity of my old friend, H. E. Miles, who had all the clippings about the convention sent in by the clipping bureaus. Miles had more than two thousand clippings of all or part of my address. In some papers it was quoted in an editorial. In others it appeared in a dispatch or special correspondence from Washington and in nearly every such case there was an editorial about it. I have been told that it got more space than any other address at the convention. I think the chief reason for this was that it was a novelty for a farmer to presume to come among the political economists and Congressmen and Senators and talk about the tariff. Some of the headings given the editorials or telegraphic dispatches about my talk are interesting. I take the space to give only nine: Farmers in Politics; Farmers Do Not Know Their Strength; Farmers Suspicious of Tariff Commission; The Unheard Majority; The Farmer on the Job; Note of Warning Sounded; The Warning of John M. Stahl; Stahl Shoots Straight and Hard; Farmer Stahl Hits from the Shoulder.

THE MAKE-UP OF A COMMISSION

I WAS heartily in favor of a permanent tariff commission — with reservations. An editorial I had in my *Illinois Farmer and Farmer's Call* attracted attention and was published as a circular by the tariff commission advocates and widely distributed. In this circular it was pointed out in introducing my editorial, that I was " the only representative of farmers on the committee that appeared before President Roosevelt three years ago to advocate a permanent non-partisan tariff commission." Also that I " was the only representative of farmers that participated in the big National Tariff Commission Convention in Indianapolis in February 1909." I am introduced in the circular as follows:

> As our readers may well know, Mr. Stahl was one of the earliest advocates of a permanent non-partisan tariff commission, to collect, arrange, digest, and present to Congress information that could be relied on as correct and uncolored, and such information as Congress must have to place intelligently and justly protective duties on articles produced in this country. He has believed in that scientific, non-partisan, businesslike adjustment of duties that is the practice in Germany, Japan, and other countries.

In this editorial I emphasized that " the make-up of a tariff commission is all-important "; that " whether a tariff commission proves to be a good thing or an evil thing will depend on the character of the men that compose that commission"; and that it should not be composed of politicians "repudiated by their constituents," but of men especially qualified for the work. And I mentioned that which was responsible for much vigorous language at the time when I said that "when we have a properly constituted tariff commission steel rails will not be laid down by the steel trust in Syria for less than the railroads of our own country choose to pay or must pay, nor will steel plates for ship building be laid down by the steel trust at the shipbuilding plants of England and Scotland for less than must be paid by our own ship builders on the Great Lakes."

I was a true protectionist; believing in protection for "infant industries" while they were infants and no longer. I had in mind my investigations, made in 1892, at no small expense, to prove or disprove the charge that the products of our protected industries were sold abroad at prices less than those charged our own people. I found those charges fully eighty percent unwarranted, giving just consideration to terms of payment in the domestic and foreign trade. I also found enough evidence to support the charge to make it plain to me that eternal vigilance is the price of a tariff approaching equitable schedules.

SENATOR BEVERIDGE

HERE I am reminded of an occurrence that perturbed me at the time, but the memory of which always brings me a smile now.

I was invited to address an important meeting in favor of a permanent tariff commission, to be held in the big Tomlinson Hall, in Indianapolis, February 16, 17, and 18, 1909. It was named "National Tariff Commission Convention." On the program were a dozen of the big men of the nation, eminent in Congress and in the study of economics and of tariffs, and leaders in national organizations. I did not feel competent to take my place on the program without additional study of my subject. I prepared my address with great care. At that time, as later, the leader (and a very able leader he was indeed) in the movement for a tariff commission was Albert J. Beveridge, one of the ablest men ever in the Senate of the United States. I read all that I could about the tariff and tariff commissions, and especially did I study the speeches of Beveridge on the tariff commission proposition. I had my subject announced as "The Unheard Majority." Beveridge followed immediately after me when we came to speak. His address was a deep and brilliant effort. Several times he remarked, "As Mr. Stahl has just said," and then he went on to present forcibly, eloquently, what, of course, I could not present so well.

Some months after this, Senator Beveridge was to address an important meeting in favor of a tariff commission, and became quite ill a week before the date of the meeting. After much consideration of other speakers I was asked to take his place! If you cannot do better, be a good understudy! One of the things I treasured for long was a letter from him enclosing a copy of his letter to the program committee of this meeting, asking that I be urged to speak in his stead. His note to me was written in pencil, doubtless as he lay or sat up in bed.

Two or three months before his untimely death, I wrote to him and suggested that he be the guest of honor at a dinner of the Allied Arts Association (of which I was president) and also "go on the air" from the radio studio with which I had a little to do. In reply I received one of his characteristically courteous, warm letters, declining until he had finished his Life of Abraham Lincoln, on which he was working to the limit of his strength, as he believed he could make it his enduring monument, not because of his ability, but because he had such a noble and inspiring theme. If he had lived to complete that Life it would have been a yet more polished as well as enduring monument, growing in majesty and beauty as the centuries receded; but unfortunately he was using, when he wrote me, more than the measure of his strength.

I have always remembered distinctly one thing about his address at the Indianapolis meeting. When he had finished he walked hurriedly to where I was sitting and said most earnestly, gazing straight into my eyes and searching my face with those wonderful eyes of his, "Was it logical? Was it the right thing? Was it logical? Did I get my points out strong — and plain — and easily understood? Was it logical?" It was logical. At times it was eloquent, but it was plain that eloquence did not concern him. Was it logical? Did it reach the understanding and carry conviction? That was his concern. He was very much in earnest.

I think that after Senator Beveridge the man most responsible for a tariff commission is Alvin H. Sanders, editor emeritus of the *Breeder's Gazette.*

FALSE AND TRUE RECIPROCITY

I BELIEVE in reciprocity in trade among nations. The nations of North and South America, of Europe and of Asia, will draw closer together. Such things as the radio and aviation will inevitably bring that to pass. And that will make easier and more profitable closer and more equitable as well as freer trade arrangements. Those arrangements will become more and more reciprocal. We should study what was called, in the days of its great apostles, James G. Blaine and Cushman K. Davis, Reciprocity. I believed in it thoroughly then and often wrote and spoke in its favor. I believe in it now.

Notwithstanding that I believed thoroughly in Reciprocity, in 1910–11 I felt compelled to oppose a proposed reciprocity arrangement with Canada. It was not easy for me to do this, for it was a pet measure of the Taft administration and President Taft was friendly to the modern parcel post I was advocating.

Blaine had made the idea of business reciprocity among the nations popular. Quite a number of reciprocity treaties had been negotiated. This was in the latter part of the 1890s. I believe that it can be proved that they would have been approved by the Senate of the United States if Cushman K. Davis, Senator from Minnesota and Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Senate, also the leading advocate of reciprocity in that body at that time, had not been careless in trimming the nail of his big toe. In 1900 he died of blood poisoning when at the height of his power and when he was sorely needed in the Senate. His death, coming just when it did, was a loss that has cost this country hundreds of millions of dollars.

In 1910–11 it was proposed to enact into law what was known as the Canadian Reciprocity Bill. After carefully studying this bill I was convinced that it would be very hurtful to the farmers of the United States if enacted into law.

The President knew that I was opposed to the Canadian reciprocity agreement. I had the very highest opinion of him and regretted that what little influence I might have should be in opposition to his wishes. There was some correspondence about his writing me a letter presenting his side and which I would publish in my farm paper and give to the press. I have two letters about this from the Department of State. I wanted above all things to be fair, for the administration was certainly going right about parcel post, and going strong. A letter was sent me from the Department of State for publication and which I published in my *Illinois Farmer*, but as the author wrote me, "As regards my own letter, I am not surprised that the press associations did not make use of it. My newspaper experience coincides with their judgment." However, they did use a long statement I made in opposition to the measure. The editors thought as I did about it. My statement was published or quoted in several thousand papers. It was generally preceded by big headlines, often double column headlines. The only newspaper copy I have has nine big double-column headlines. One paper, I remember, used fourteen double-column headlines.

I think it went into the matter thoroughly and made a fair presentation. I was well prepared to discuss Canadian conditions, for I had traveled to very nearly all the settled parts of Canada several times on different trips.

I do not think that President Taft ever committed himself and his administration to any other bill as he did to the one to put into effect, so far as this country could, the reciprocity treaty with Canada. Fortunately the treaty never went into effect. In all the history of our tariff legislation there has not been any measure more against the agricultural industries while refusing to lessen to any extent the protection that permitted manufacturers to charge the prices made by high duties. No tariff measure has more boldly discriminated against the farmer of the United States in favor of our own manufacturers and, what was worse, in favor of foreigners.

The Farmers' National Congress had previously gone hand in hand with the Taft administration. Until he took his inexplicable stand on the misnamed reciprocity pact with Canada President Taft had been the sincere and helpful friend of the farmer. It was not easy for me, the Legislative Agent of the Farmers' National Congress, to take the stand I did, and which was in due succession approved by the Executive Committee of the Congress and then by the Congress itself.

The prosperity of all classes of our people will be best promoted by basing our tariff on the fact that some of our industries are so far removed from infancy that the interests of our consumers should have the dominating voice; and also on the fact that the most extensive and profitable international trade — and international trade will have much influence in determining our prosperity and well-being — must be reciprocal.

Notwithstanding President Taft's attitude on the pact with Canada, I thought (and have so thought ever since) that he was a very honest and patriotic man, of very great ability indeed; of wide experience in government affairs certainly; desirous above all things of being a good President and succeeding as but few Presidents had; but a man more skeptical of the good intentions and motives of others and a shrewder politician would have avoided some of his mistakes. He has a big heart as well as a big brain. He is one of the ablest and most conscientious public men of our history. A year after our disagreement on the Canadian pact he recognized my leadership in the fight for a modern parcel post and gave me the support that won the day.

CHAPTER XV

FOR BETTER ROADS

HON. THOMAS B. REED

ANYONE who spent the 1860s and 1870s in Illinois would be disgusted with the dirt roads, although he might not become a "good roads crank." When I was a dozen years of age I was sent with loads of wheat to the railway station ten miles away, reached by dirt roads over every foot of the ten miles and enlivened by a number of steep, clay hills. I am sure that was the beginning of my desire for good roads. It is not easy or agreeable to shovel a way out for the wagon stalled in a sticky, clay road.

When I began writing for the farm papers in 1875, among my first articles were those advocating permanent road improvement. I had not been a year in my campaign for the delivery of mail to farmers until I knew that one of the arguments that would be advanced against rural mail delivery was that it would be impossible for the carrier to deliver mail to the farmers during a great part of the year on account of the roads being impassable.

Further, I knew only too well that this argument was a good one. For weeks at a time the roads with which I was familiar were actually impassable. More than once a man who attempted to ride his horse through the clay at the bottom of the long hill that led from our house, was compelled to dismount and come to us and borrow a spade with which to dig out his horse. I saw plainly that along with my campaign for delivery of mail to farmers I must conduct a vigorous campaign for the improvement of the roads.

Said Hon. Thomas B. Reed in an address to the graduating class of a Philadelphia "College of Business" in December 1894 — oh, I see, who was Mr. Reed? Well, a few may remember him because of his pants. In his day he was a well-known member of Congress from Maine. He was Speaker of the House, and certain complicated, vexatious rules of the House adopted while he was Speaker were said to have been brewed by him. He gleefully used them to annoy his loving enemies, the Democrats. Many loved him not, for he had a merciless brain and a vicious tongue. Some would put it the other way: a vicious brain and a merciless tongue. He was the possessor of one of the two most famous pair of pants of all American history. (They were not trousers or breeches or pantaloons.) The other pair were the property of Dr. Mary Walker. Tom Reed was not projected very high into the heavens, but he occupied much of the landscape. This was largely due to his underpinning. When he was most prominent the age of the crease in the trouser leg was yet young. Tom had a pair of white "duck" pants. He had the crease, not front and rear, but down the sides. I saw him wear them so creased. When he moved down Pennsylvania Avenue the people with ordinary pants or with no visible pants got off the sidewalk.

It will not be amiss to remind the reader briefly of some occurrences which have an effect on the proceedings of Congress to this date and have been responsible for a great deal of legislation, good and bad, being ground out in the city on the Potomac. Mr. Reed, already nominated twice for Speaker by the minority of two preceding Congresses, was elected Speaker December 2, 1889, by the 51st Congress. This was the beginning of a bitter partisan fight which engrossed the attention of the nation. It resulted in the adoption by the House of rules of procedure which certainly greatly expedited business, for they took from a small minority the power to block any and all legislation. The most notable of these rules was:

> On the demand of any member, or at the suggestion of the Speaker, the names of members sufficient to make a quorum in the Hall of the House who do not vote, shall be noted by the Clerk and recorded in the Journal and reported to the Speaker with the names of the members voting, and be counted and announced in determining the presence of a quorum to do business.

The *Congressional Record* for some years previous and subsequent to the adoption of "the Reed rules" is often not dull reading.

Reed was Speaker when Bingham introduced his joint resolution August 29, 1890. Once he asked me if I thought he favored delivery of mail to farmers. I told him I did not know and really did not care, for he had so many enemies his support might be harmful rather than beneficial. This pleased him. He was a man of great ability, had some millions of admirers, and was one of the three most prominent candidates for the nomination for President before the Republican national convention of 1896. He was then Speaker of the House again.

In his address to the graduating class he said:

> One of the greatest civilizers of the world is something we hardly think of, either as a civilizer or as wealth — the common country road. Few people ever think how much roads cost us. They represent the surplus labor of centuries. They make possible the transfer of the abundance of one region to supplement the want of another. And yet, the modern road, crossing the country in all directions, traversable by carriages and carts, as well as beasts, does not go back to the times of good Queen Bess. Indeed, in her reign thousands might starve in one county, while abundance filled the granaries of the others.
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> Think of men and women and children starving from mere lack of that form of wealth which we call roads in the days when Drake and the great captains were scouring the seas in search of the Spanish galleons and Spanish gold and when the military might of England hurled back the Spanish Armada and all the power of the greatest nation on the face of the globe. In the very heart of London, in the street named after the King himself, the only way one of the Edwards could get to his parliament was to fill with great bunches of fagots the holes in the streets.

EARLY WORK

I BELIEVE that I have done my share of work for good roads. Further, I did that work when any real improvement of the dirt roads of ninety percent of the United States and of ninety-eight percent of the Mississippi Valley was so unpopular that it certainly required moral courage, or something even more disreputable and foolish, to be a "good roads crank," as the advocate of good roads was generally called.

As early as 1880 I was made only too well aware that to overcome the opposition to road improvement, not only among farmers, but among others, it would be necessary to show conclusively that the money put into road improvement of the right sort would be a profitable investment; profitable in dollars and cents, regardless of other items of profit, such as increased social and educational facilities. This indifference to gains other than financial was most pronounced among the male heads of farm families. Road improvement such as I could conscientiously recommend would cost money; comparatively much money. This certainly meant increased taxation; and the tax burden was so heavy and the financial condition of farmers and others was such that an increase in taxes that would be trivial now was then enough to arouse intense hostility. And then, as always, the farmer had to carry more than his just share of the tax burden, although in this regard the small merchant, such as made up the class of village and small town merchants, was little less unjustly assessed. The big corporations were then much more successful in escaping their just share of taxation than they are now. The feeling against that road improvement which would increase taxation was shared with the farmer by the people of the towns and villages. The relation between these classes was close financially, for the merchant, farm machinery agent, and even the blacksmith carried the farmers on their books.

Hence more and more I delved into the financial factors in road making. I read what I could obtain about the character of the roads that had proved most satisfactory in Europe. Through the kindness of friends who had emigrated from Great Britain, Germany, France, and other European countries, I was able to write to officials who proved in every case most courteous (I have never found a European official otherwise) and who sent me printed matter and wrote painstakingly at length, giving me information of the best materials, means and methods, and the cost. Then I had to get information about the wages of the labor that procured and prepared the materials, and in road making, to determine the probable cost in the United States. It seemed to me that each month there came to the surface some new factor that must be taken into account; and to fit it correctly into road making in this country required investigation that was much more laborious and at times perplexing than appeared probable when one began.

While the cost in the United States of such road making as I could conscientiously recommend was so high that I was sorely tempted to join with farm leaders and many good road advocates, and with all important farmer organizations except the Farmers' National Congress, and even some *soi-disant* good roads organizations, in recommending dirt road improvement, I am happy to say that I have to my discredit less than a dozen articles or addresses making such recommendation and that in these I recommended dirt road improvement only as a temporary expedient having in view permanent road improvement; that is, paved roads. I did not sin enormously against wise road making, for by 1900 I wrote more than 220 articles and made all of 200 addresses in advocacy of permanent road improvement. Even when I was lecturing about "A Farmer Abroad" (I had three lectures on that) at chautauqua assemblies in a dozen States, I always brought in something about the roads abroad, making use of the facts and figures about these roads that I had obtained. Just as after the first year I advocated complete delivery of mail to farmers, so from almost the beginning

I advocated paved roads. The two were bound up together.

The *organized, aggressive* good roads campaign that continued until it was successful was begun in the Midland in the early 1890s. There was good road sentiment in spots throughout the country; and the organized, persistent movement began in some places in 1891. Most of those places were in the East, where, of course, there had been some good roads for a century, and where there had been right along sporadic good roads campaigns. But as late as 1892 the good roads advocates, too often correctly called "enthusiasts," had contented themselves with bald assertions only; or, if they had brought forward figures to sustain their assertions, these figures were so incomplete, and often were so transparently incorrect, that they worked only for evil, particularly as they put on the defensive one who brought forward correct figures; and they cast doubt on those figures. Facts and figures that could not be successfully attacked, and many of them, were certainly necessary to overcome the opposition to increased taxation of farmers, heavily in debt, and the merchants and others whose business interests were closely knit with those of farmers.

I think that by this time the reader probably understands that I found a real pleasure in getting the needed figures about road making in the United States. I was generously given credit by my associates in the organized good roads movement, especially those in the wise and vigorous League of American Wheelmen, for getting fully one-half of the needed statistics — some were even more generous in giving me credit — and for putting them into effective logical form.

ORGANIZED EFFORT

BECAUSE the facts about the organized good roads movement that persisted to success, including those about public opinion as well as the material conditions and the material obstacles to be overcome, are of historical interest, I will give a few of these facts; especially as they are revealed in half a dozen of my articles or addresses, for in this way I can also indicate the variety and extent of my efforts for permanent good roads.

As I write these lines there lies before me a copy in pamphlet form of "An Address Delivered by John M. Stahl, Editor and Farmer, before the Meeting of the Illinois Highway Association, held in Springfield, March 29 and 30, 1892." My address is entitled, "Good Roads for the Farmer, His Wife and Child." Thousands of copies of this address were printed and distributed by the League of American Wheelmen and by other good roads enthusiasts. I have reason to believe this was one of the very earliest *State* good roads meetings held in Illinois. I have been told that it was the first. I doubt that. Waves of excitement and enthusiasm about good roads passed over the country more than once in the nineteenth century and even before. I think some of these waves must have reached Illinois before 1892. Those of us that attended the meeting considered it a good meeting because all of one hundred people attended. They came from all parts of the state. Of course everyone was "a good roads crank." But we were considered harmless and were not molested. By that much this meeting differed from more than one good roads meeting I have attended.

The meeting in Springfield is notable for this: *it was the beginning of the campaign for good roads that continued until Illinois was being "dug out of the mud" in earnest.*

At that meeting the first thing done was to organize the Illinois Highway Improvement Association. Then the Association held its first meeting. I was offered the presidency of the Association. I declined. I was too busy to give the office proper attention.

I began my long address at this meeting by saying:

> Transportation is a tax, and the *producer* pays it. What price, in every case, does the producer receive? The price paid by the consumer less the cost of getting the article from the one to the other. The greater this cost the less the price received by the producer.

I have since heard that very fiercely disputed. I was younger then than I am now. I was yet of the age of positive assertions. When one is 69 he is not so sure of many things as he is at 32. I had been rereading Adam Smith and others. Perhaps the reader need not be told that. Perhaps, again, I was wrong in thinking that the producer bears all the cost of getting his product to the consumer; that of two producers having the same market the one that gets his product to that market at the lower cost will by so much get the more for it. I am aware that a great deal depends upon the market being a free market; and that perhaps there are not many free markets in the United States. Markets generally seem to be controlled; at least, greatly influenced, by those not producers. Much more might be written, bearing on the proposition that as the producer lowers the cost of getting his product to the consumer he increases the price received by him; but I leave the discussion of this to others. In my address I said:

> Jones must haul his grain ten miles to the railway station, Smith but five; but Jones does not get more for his grain on that account. It presumably costs Jones practically twice as much to get his grain to the nearby market, hence it nets him the less on the farm. Grain raised five hundred miles from Chicago or Buffalo brings no more there than grain of the same grade produced two hundred and fifty miles away. . . . Clearly the grain produced nearer the market nets the higher price to the producer on the farm. This is equally true if the product does not reach the ultimate buyer in Chicago or Buffalo, but passes on to Liverpool or Berlin. Hence just as we reduce the transportation charges of our products to the consumer do we increase the price that we receive. And as this increase in the price of farm products does not make any increase in the cost of production, whatever we save in transportation cost is so much added to net profit. On some farm products it is easily possible to double the net profit by savings in transportation charges.
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> Hence the means of transportation are among the most important implements of agriculture. The highways in the farmer's neighborhood are as truly agricultural implements as are his plow and self-binder; and the railway car that hauls his grain or cattle is a farm vehicle as truly as is his wagon.

It is just as important to dispose of products to advantage as to produce economically. Profit depends fully as much upon selling for a good price as upon producing at a low cost. Distribution cuts as big a figure as does production.

Farmers discover; yes, *discover* that last paragraph about every ten years; but they do not yet fully comprehend it.

COST OF WAGON TRANSPORTATION

I BROUGHT forth a great array of figures to prove that " steam will move during 1892 agricultural products equivalent to moving one mile 36,000,000,000 tons." (And we were not accustomed to billions then.) I proved, to my own satisfaction, at least, that " even in Illinois farm products must be transported by wagon an average distance of a little less than eight miles and the average cost per ton mile is 25 cents." (In 1906 the Bureau of Statistics of the Department of Agriculture collected data from 1894 counties in various parts of the United States, and from them made an estimate that the average distance from the farm to the nearest market was 9.4 miles, and that the average cost per ton to the farmers for hauling their farm products from the farm to the market was 23 cents per mile. Illinois had more miles of railroad than any other State and perhaps the worst roads of all. Hence in that State the average distance farm products had to be hauled by wagon to market was slightly less, while the cost per ton mile was slightly more, than the average of the country. It will be seen that fourteen years before I had made a close estimate. My figures were never disputed.) In my address I continued: " The annual wagon transportation of our Illinois farm products is now equivalent to moving 2,640,000,000 tons one mile. That is conservative."

When comparison is made with steam transportation it must be considered that substantially all farm products moved by steam have been moved by wagon and that a large amount of farm products moved by wagon is not moved by steam and yet another amount is moved by steam in a form of less weight. This was true of larger comparative amounts in 1892 than is true now. Then there were flouring mills in thousands of towns, packing plants in many cities, sawmills in numerous rural locations. The farmer hauled grain to the mill and hauled back flour and bran. He hauled logs to the sawmill and hauled back lumber. He hauled fat animals to the meat packing plant and the meat from them was in large measure taken to the consumer in the same city. None of these farm products was transported by rail.

Current Topics was a rather formidable monthly magazine published in Chicago. It was a product of the enthusiasm and aspirations of the World Fair period. It had the moral support of the new University of Chicago. Among its contributors were some of the most eminent thinkers and authors of the country. It was short lived. In its March 1893 issue, I had a long article that attracted no little attention throughout the country. I have traveled extensively the past four years in the United States and I have been surprised by the need of education about the benefits from good roads. Of course conditions have greatly changed since 1893. The United States has grown. The movement of freight has grown. In 1893 no one foresaw the millions of automobiles now in use or a gasoline tax yielding to a comparatively poor state more than twelve millions of dollars a year. Yet only recently a good roads organization pointed out that only a fraction of our roads had been improved at all. The arguments of thirty-five years ago are basically as good now as they were then, although figures must be changed and some new, and important, factors must be included.

In my article in *Current Topics,* and my articles in other periodicals, and also in my addresses at this time, I pointed out that the wagon transportation of the country cost $1,000,000,000 a year; that to accomplish real road improvement the tax to apply on the roads must be collected, not in labor, but in money — "working the roads," which was the way in which the road tax was generally paid, was a frolic without much benefit to the roads; that there must be fewer road officials — the petty officials lacked the knowledge necessary to make good roads; that competent engineers, having the latest knowledge about road making, should be employed; that each state should have a state road commission to experiment and to disseminate information about the best methods of road making; and that there should be a county and also a state tax for road improvement and maintenance. Now, all this was revolutionary to ninety percent of the people of the country and some of it was revolutionary and alarming to ninety-nine percent plus of the people. I remember that the editor of *Current Topics* hesitated to use my article; that some periodicals refused my articles taking the same ground; and that after I had spoken at several meetings the chairman half apologized for what I had said. To advocate the employment of engineers at what seemed to be enormous salaries and also a county and a state road tax was going altogether too far! It was so regarded although I proved to the satisfaction of some and presented arguments that could not be disproved that showed that such road improvement as I advocated would save each year $500,000,000 in highway transportation.

In my *Current Topics* article I said:

> While the benefits from good roads would be most largely and directly bestowed upon farmers, all classes and conditions would feel these benefits. Any economy in transportation is an actual gain, since by so much it increases the wealth or reduces the labor of society. The increase in the value of an article due to change of location is the same, whether that change is effected by a certain expenditure of time and force or by an expenditure one half as great. An annual saving of five hundred million dollars in wagon transportation is so much added to the national wealth, increasing by so much the capability of all deserving people, high or low, in city or country, to have and to enjoy.

Five hundred million dollars appeared to be much more in 1893 than it appears to be now. This country has increased amazingly in annual production and annual expenditure and in accumulated wealth during the past thirty-six years. I again make the observation that in the nineties we did not think in billions.

Later on I said:

> What a really enormous amount is $500,000,000! It is four times the mortgage indebtedness of this state. It is three times the farm mortgage indebtedness of Kansas, about which so much is said. The saving by good roads in the transportation of farm products would soon pay off every existing farm mortgage. In three years it would extinguish our national debt.

What I wrote and what I often said, did not make me friends among those that liked the annual frolic of working on the roads, or wished the little job of road overseer, or who had much taxable property, or who believed in dirt roads. In 1893 and for years after, those just named made up the large majority.

ROADS AND ROAD SENTIMENT IN 1892

THE MAJORITY of my readers have never seen such roads as were the roads of Illinois and other states in 1892, when I helped to organize the Illinois State Highway Association. In 1892 Illinois and other states had no other kind. And the streets of all the villages, and of more than one half of the towns that called themselves cities, were altogether unpaved. In the dozen largest cities, almost one half the length of the streets was plain dirt, and in those cities most of the paved streets, so claimed, and all of the paved streets in moderate sized cities, were only graveled. In 1880 Quincy was a hustling city of more than 36,000 population, with many large manufacturing establishments. It was a leader in the manufacture of stoves, hay presses, and plug tobacco! — and it had a good wholesale trade in dry goods, groceries, drugs, and hardware. Broadway was one of its half dozen most important streets. It was the longest street in the city and the highway entrance into the city from the country.

Some forty years ago, in the early 1880s, K. K. Jones, a "good roads crank," wrote to the leading Quincy paper as follows:

> Members of the board of supervisors voted against appropriating $1150 to aid in gravelling Broadway east to the city limits, because "if one good road were made more would be demanded." Yes, gentlemen, and that demand will have to be respected. The days of bad roads are about over and the seats of supervisors who oppose them will be occupied by men of broader views and more public spirit.

"Broadway east to the city limits" was not outside the city, but altogether within the city!

In September 1888, a prominent woman of Quincy advertised in the Quincy papers that she had discovered when she reached her home that she had lost her shoes in the mud of Eighth Street — the street that cut through the heart of the city. She offered a suitable reward for their discovery and delivery. My advices are that they were never dug up, although a good portion of the street was — by horses and vehicles; but the bottom of the mud could not be reached by man or beast.

The pure, unadulterated dirt road of Illinois is probably as bad, as unmoral, as hopeless a road as there is anywhere, or as can be imagined. In the old days it was worse than it is now, for then there were no main roads paved or graveled to bear the greater part of the traffic and thus spare the dirt roads. Illinois roads were no worse than the roads of most other states.

Yet very few wanted the roads improved. The farmers, who would be the most benefited by the improvement, were the ones most hostile to it. They knew that road improvement would increase their taxes, and the one thing the farmer could always complain about was taxes. There were many more like them. Because of the feeling of farmers, and others, about the cost of good roads, the task of the advocates of good roads was to show the gain from them: that the cost would not bankrupt even the farmer if it were equitably distributed; and how it could be thus distributed.

I thought it unfair that the farmer should pay all the cost of road improvement, or even the most of it, and therefore was one of the first half dozen in the United States to advocate state aid for good roads. This was all of ten years before the first automobile on an Illinois road scared all the horses and set the farmers to cleaning their shotguns. A few fanatical bicyclists (I was one of them!) ventured on the country roads, but I fear some of their relatives doubted their sanity, and among the most charitable they were probably pitied. Hence there was practically no sentiment for road improvement in the towns and cities, and when the other cranks and I advocated state aid we stirred up opposition in the cities, and when we advocated road improvement of any kind by any means, with or without state aid, we stirred up opposition in the country. But in time sentiment in favor of road improvement began to grow in towns and cities; in time there was in the towns and cities some sentiment for state aid. Various organizations were doing philanthropic, patriotic, telling work for road improvement with state aid. Chief among these was the League of American Wheelmen, the by far outstanding advocate of good roads among the organizations of the United States. I was generously credited by it and other organizations with formulating the best arguments for state aid. I was always digging up and using "figgers." I can not remember when I was not told that I was of "a mathematical turn of mind." At any rate, I always relished statistics, and tried to reason from them, and to arrive at conclusions by the mathematical route with mathematical certainty. (Perhaps that was in part due to Ray's "mental arithmetic.") I did my best for the cause of state aid in road improvement. Finally the advocates of road improvement won public sentiment and tangible results. But the fight was long, hard, and at times very discouraging.

Some of the worst die-hards about road improvement and the greatest obstructionists were not farmers. The most shining examples were tonguey demagogues holding or striving for public office. I remember, for an example, of going to a county farmers' institute in eastern Illinois. I think it was 1896 or 1897. The county was near the top in wealth and intelligence. The institute was in the courthouse. I had a large, attentive, and kind audience. I made my best arguments for road improvement with state aid. Apparently I had won my audience. While talking I was frequently applauded; and the applause was hearty. The county superintendent of schools was not on the program, but when I finished he arose and, without asking permission, began to speak. I had talked with him that day and found that he certainly had not read a serious book for at least twenty years. He declared, each statement louder than the one before, until he reached the bellowing pitch, that "dirt roads were good enough for the people that settled this country; dirt roads have been good enough for the people of the United States for more than two hundred years; dirt roads were good enough for the men that fought under Washington, the Father of his Country, to lick the British; dirt roads have been good enough for the men, women, and children that have made this beautiful land of ours what it is; dirt roads were good enough for our fathers and mothers and brothers and sisters that lie in the graveyards that dot this county; and I tell you, fellow citizens and voters and taxpayers, that what has been good enough for everyone since the Pilgrims landed in 1607 is good enough for us and for the smart alecks from the cities." He got the crowd. They cheered him. I admired him. He knew what he wanted and how to get it. No one thought to question that the Pilgrims landed in 1607. I heard such demagogic road talk many times. All things considered the greatest blessing that could come to this country would be the discovery by some Arrowsmith of the germ of an always fatal disease, highly contagious, but that attacked only demagogues.

Of course I could not believe in anything and not write about it. Those that put out the "patent inside" of thousands of local papers used whatever I sent them. I talked good roads at many farmers' meetings and chautauquas. I talked on " Three Profitable Farm Hands: Mail Delivery, Telephones, and Good Roads." I talked about these farm hands in more than three-fourths of the States.

THE LEAGUE OF AMERICAN WHEELMEN — AND OTTO DORNER

THE League of American Wheelmen did more to bring about road improvement in the United States than any other organization. It originated in the fertile brain of Kirk Munroe, author of more than thirty books for youths; an old friend of mine, now a resident of Florida for more than forty years. He organized the first unit of the L. A. W. at Newport, R. I., May 31, 1880. During the years of the popularity of the bicycle it was an organization having a strong membership in every state and thousands of members in some states. It had an influence far beyond what its membership would indicate; for its members were exceedingly aggressive and energetic. I have only one of my L. A. W. membership cards. It is for the year 1899. It is No. 122,819. At that time the L. A. W. had several hundred thousand members and they were exceedingly " live " about good roads. I seemed to be the only audible farmer of any prominence in the L. A. W. and as a result it fell to me to " do the heavy stuff," as A. Cressy Morrison (now busy in another field) was wont to call it, to convert the farmer to permanent good roads.

The "speed maniac" and the automobile well-nigh finished the bicycle. They did a complete job on the L. A. W.

Col. A. A. Pope, president of the company that manufactured the popular Columbia bicycle, was the most liberal and prominent member of the L. A. W. The good roads forces of the L. A. W. were led, however, by Isaac B. Potter, of New York, the most active president of the L. A. W.; Gen. Roy Stone, Engineer in Charge of the U. S.

OTTO DORNER

Who was acclaimed by the press throughout the country as the leading advocate of good roads

GEN. ROY STONE

For nearly a quarter of a century Director of the Office of Road Inquiry and then head of the Bureau of Public Roads, U. S. Department of Agriculture. His term of service began about 1890

Roads Inquiry Office after that office was created as the result of the demand of good roads cranks, including the early members of the L. A. W.; and A. Cressy Morrison and Otto Dorner, both of Milwaukee, Wis. First Morrison and then Dorner was for some years chairman of the Good Roads Committee of the L. A. W. It would be hard to say which of the four named did the most or the best work for good roads. I think the palm should be given to Dorner, for he was longest in the field and was the last to quit the fight. He was the most logical, interesting, and earnest speaker for good roads that I ever heard. He studied law in the office of Senator Quarles and passed the examinations for the bar before he was old enough to be licensed to practice. When he was a young man, he and his father, both residing in Milwaukee, ran for the State Legislature at the same time. Dorner talked good roads in season and possibly out of season, but he had always an attentive and converted audience. He was always a city man, but one of the stories I told about patient Otto Dorner dealt with an incident at the chautauqua at Champaign, Illinois. It was probably the year 1897. Dorner was to talk at the chautauqua in the forenoon, and of course his subject was "Good Roads." I was to talk in the afternoon. It was "Farmers' Day." Arriving in the city about eleven A.M., I went out to the chautauqua grounds, and my story was that just as I got within hearing distance I heard Dorner — he had not observed me — exclaim, in his loudest voice, "Now, my *brother farmers!*"

I have never known a finer, nobler, more lovable character than Otto Dorner. Anyone might well be proud to call him friend. The four old bachelors, cronies, of thirty years ago: Otto, Joe, Monroe, and John, are widely separated and all have entered into the blessed unrest of the married; and John hereby bears testimony that he who has three such friends as Joe Hirons and Otto Dorner and Monroe Moss can count riches beyond gold and silver, although these friends have not met since John led the way out of bachelorhood well nigh thirty years ago! And had well nigh to *trot* to the proper location, with Joe, his best man, whispering excitedly, "Git thar! Hike!" all because in the vestry Rector Ernest M. Stires, now Bishop of Long Island, told such an entrancing fish story that rector, groom, and best man did not observe the proceedings of other people having a part in the event!

I HIRE A DRESS SUIT

THE L. A. W. was responsible for one of the two experiences in my life of hiring a dress suit; and fully one half of the blame, I think, should rest on the conscience of Otto Dorner.

The big annual meeting of the L. A. W., in February 1898, was in St. Louis. I had not intended to be at this meeting. I was very busy. But the day before the meeting opened I received urgent letters and then telegrams from Dorner, Morrison, Potter, and others, saying I was down for a big address if not for *the* address of the meeting (those fellows did not spare the "applesauce,") ; they had never thought for a moment that I would not attend, that it was very important that I should attend, that the meeting would be disappointed if I did not attend, and so on. Those fellows knew my weakness and they were utterly unscrupulous about flattery and downright lying to put over something when they were on a good roads campaign! But they wrote me not a word about a formal banquet. I actually had a spiketail suit, and of course I left it at home.

Arrived at St. Louis I found that there was to be a big banquet that night, at which the mayor of the city would preside, and at which a long list of municipal, state, and national notables would be present; that the banquet would be very formal, being in St. Louis, where French social ideas governed; that I was on the program for one of the formal addresses and was put down to give the heavy artillery stuff for good roads! And especially for state and national aid!

That was the beginning of an experience I shall never forget. Because of a mistake made by a firm that hired out dress suits, I entered the banquet hall wearing a shirt gaping and crisscrossed with strings up the back, coat tails four inches too long, and my trousers turned up three inches at the bottom, said trousers being of a very dark brown. I was ushered into the banquet room by my friends, who kindly surrounded me and thus protected me from the gaze of others. Fortunately, although pressed to take a seat at the speakers' table, on a raised platform, I was not required to do so, and my friends protested that they wished to have me seated among them. They did! If there was ever a more comical and pitiable sight than I presented when I left my room for the banquet hall it was when I left the banquet hall for my room!

I think my clothing made me speak all the better that evening. I was angry enough to put unusual force into my remarks. My subject was "State Aid in Road Making." Mayor Ziegenheim presided at the banquet. Governor Stephens spoke on "Highways of Missouri," and I. B. Potter, president of the L. A. W., on the "Crusade for Good Roads."

THE GOOD ROADS MAGAZINE

OF COURSE the L. A. W. had to have a magazine. It was a monthly, and quite pretentious, and was called *Good Roads.* Isaac B. Potter was the first managing editor and for a time it was published from the Potter Building, New York City. Later it was published in Boston and the managing editor was Sterling Elliott. I have saved two numbers. One is dated December 1892. I have quite a long article in it, entitled, "The Economic Importance of Good Roads." I dealt with some large figures for that date. I said:

> It is conservative to say that for 1892 the freight transportation within our borders by rail and water of articles of our own production will reach 900,000,000 tons, and be the equivalent of moving one

mile 120,000,000,000 tons. . . . During the year ending June 30, 1890, the freight traffic on the Mississippi River and its tributaries reached 29,405,046 tons — equal to more than one half the freight moved on the Great Lakes.

The figures and the ratio have changed much since 1890. One of the striking changes of the past fifty years is in the comparative amount of transportation on the rivers. When I was in St. Louis in the 1880s the river front was the scene of great activity. River packets were loading and unloading. The wharves were thick with people and boxes. Passengers and spectators and deckhands made an interesting study. The river traffic was of much importance. Later, when I made my headquarters in Quincy, I often went, as did hundreds of others, to the river front when was heard the prolonged whistle of an approaching packet. (People took life more leisurely then.) Those packets were palatial. The meals on the best Mississippi River packets were better than those of the best hotels of New York City. There was no other traveling so pleasant as that on this river. The passenger traffic was heavy; but it was not nearly so important as the freight traffic.

This December 1892, (note the date) *Good Roads* was a special Illinois number, and I felt it quite a compliment that I was so well known, and by others as well as farmers, as an advocate of good roads that I was selected to make the chief argument for good roads. This number was well illustrated with pictures, from photographs, of wagons hopelessly mired and abandoned in the principal streets of some of the important cities of the State. One picture is labelled " Photographic View of Abandoned Delivery Wagon within City Limits of Chicago, taken in Spring of 1892." This accompanies the picture: " The mud was so bad as to force the grocers to get out their hand carts and deliver their goods to their customers in that way." Another picture is labelled " Chicago mud. Wagon abandoned at Ogden Ave. and 22nd Street, April 6, 1891. (By courtesy of *Century Magazine*.) "

The L. A. W. had another organ: *The L. A. W. Bulletin and Good Roads.* I took for the text of a good many of my road talks two sentences from the leading editorial in its issue of February 25, 1898:

> There need be no isolation in rural communities. On the contrary, the very pattern and purpose of society should find its highest attainment among those whose lives are lived nearest the heart of nature.

In this issue I am introduced in quite a long article. Of me it is said that my " sympathy with the good roads cause has been shown in active work for years."

Three years before that, in the February 1895 issue, I had another long article on good roads.

A BANQUET TO GENERAL STONE

A FRIEND has just sent me a copy of the Milwaukee *Sentinel* of November 15, 1896. It contains a long account of a banquet at the Pfister Hotel, given by A. Cressy Morrison in honor of Gen. Roy Stone. The account says that "Thomas M. Blackstock, of Sheboygan, presided and acted as toastmaster. At his right hand sat the guest of honor, Gen. Roy Stone, and at his left, John M. Stahl, Secretary of the Farmers' National Congress. Next was Hon. W. D. Hoard, etc."

Ex-Governor Hoard spoke, and of course General Stone, and of course Farmer Stahl, and of course Otto Dorner. The newspaper account says that only General Stone and I "spoke at length; the other speeches were brief." But then General Stone and I had been told we must carry the banner.

I can not remember anything of this banquet, but I was certainly there, and if I was I know I had a mighty good time with Otto Dorner, Cressy Morrison, General Stone and Governor Hoard. I liked to eat and I liked to talk about a subject in which I was greatly interested and I liked even more to hear others talk when they were such talkers as Hoard, Stone, Dorner, and Morrison.

It may seem improbable, but it is a fact that I have any distinct recollection of only a few of the many dinners and meetings that I have attended. I think the reason of this is that I have the happy, or unhappy, faculty of concentration. I think of something and that only; at the time giving it all my thought. Then, when it is of interest to me no longer, I forget about it, for all my thought is being given to something else. For a fact I have " a single track mind." But is it not by concentration that one accomplishes most? He will do the greatest work who can say, " This one thing I do."

As Legislative Agent of the Farmers' National Congress I got out and widely circulated a series of good roads leaflets. Those prominent in the good roads movement praised these leaflets highly indeed. I think the praise was merited, for I stole freely and boldly from what I thought was the best that had been produced by General Stone and Dorner, Morrison, Potter, and the other big guns of the battle for good roads. One thing is certain: the leaflets got a great deal of attention, and it was not all friendly. They made some people mad. If I ever got out anything in favor of some legislation or reform and it did not make some people mad, I knew that effort was a failure. That which does not make someone mad is too weak to be owned. (That word *mad* is used advisedly.)

Perhaps the leaflet that stirred up the most interest was my " Farmers' National Congress Good Roads Leaflet No. 1." It aroused criticism, favorable and unfavorable, because, for one thing, it came from a farmer organization. It was written in 1912 and was entitled " State Aid and Bonds." The proposition to issue bonds to make good roads was yet radical indeed!

The first farmers' national organization to adopt a resolution in favor of state aid in road building was the Farmers' National Congress. At its annual meeting in Ft.

Worth, Texas, December 8, 1898, it adopted a state aid resolution, introduced and ably advocated by Otto Dorner.

In the spring of 1907 I drove with my family in a Reo automobile from Chicago to Quincy, a distance of 312 miles by wagon road. It rained the first three days. The trip required four days. It was so notable the papers had long accounts of the trip. The only improvement of the mud roads we encountered was a stretch of twelve miles that had been dragged. We rejoiced in that stretch. There were no road guides whatever beyond forty miles from Chicago; no garages and no filling stations. I was compelled on one occasion to buy at a drug store a gallon of yellow stuff that it was gravely stated was gasoline. At Galesburg, the most important city on the route, I could not get any heavy motor oil and from there to Quincy, a distance of more than one hundred miles, I had to use the light lard oil used on self-binders. The farmers would not give us a drink of water; not even for our two little children. I was not allowed to put my car in a livery stable and it had to stand out in the rain. That car had two cylinders; also a big chain at each side — the shaft drive was not yet used to any extent. I paid to Ralph Temple, agent, Chicago, $1250 hard cash for it, although it had no top or windshield or speedometer or extra tire. It had no fore-doors. It did have three oil lamps. The electrical current came from four dry cells, cost 25 cents each. A much better car has since been sold for practically one fourth the price. If one drove a hundred miles he told about it at length; and, what is much more, people listened to him. Yet in 1907 the automobile was supposed to be about perfected and no one dreamed of cement roads. Good roads are responsible, more than all else, for the development of the automobile and for the millions of tourists, with all the results in social intercourse, broader views, greater knowledge, and pleasure and health beyond computation.

I suppose that every person, even the humblest, has reason, as he surveys his past life, to be thankful for some things that he has done. I am thankful that I always advocated real, substantial, durable, profitable road improvement; and was one of the early ones to see the possibilities of cement in road making, thanks to Charles H. Pope, of Moline, Illinois, who lost some thousands of his hard earned dollars in making and trying to sell cement some twenty years ago; and that I never advocated for permanent roads the foolish alleged road improvement that only hid millions of dollars in the mud of dirt roads, there to remain through all eternity.

As a last line about good roads, I wish to repeat that of all organizations most is owed to the L. A. W.; and to say that while much is owed to Gen. Roy Stone, Col. A. A. Pope, Cressy Morrison, and others, the millions that now enjoy the hundreds of thousands of miles of good roads in the United States owe more than to any other individual to the chairman of the Good Roads Committee of the L. A. W., now a retiring, very modest lawyer of Milwaukee, of whom they know nothing and care no more: Otto Dorner.

CHAPTER XVI

FARMERS' NATIONAL CONGRESS

ITS CHARACTER AND STANDING

IN WHAT I have written I have several times mentioned the Farmers' National Congress. I was an officer of this organization for twenty-one years. I attended twenty-five consecutive annual meetings.

The membership of this organization was made up of active and associate members appointed by the Governors of the states; and also one active member from each national agricultural organization and each bureau or section of the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The active members from each state were twice the number of Congressmen and Senators from that state and two for each state organization and each state department of an agricultural nature. These were nominated by the state agricultural organizations of each state. The associate members were the representatives of the agricultural organizations of each state of less than state jurisdiction. The associate members had all the rights and privileges of active members except voting. The active membership of the Congress ranged between fifteen hundred and two thousand. At some of its meetings the total attendance was well above two thousand; others than delegates attending as interested spectators.

The Congress had a unique distinction which was responsible for much of its character and influence: the members were required to pay out of their own pockets all the expenses of their attendance at meetings and in addition they were each assessed a small amount to cover the expenses of the meetings. Several times some of the states appropriated money to pay the expenses of delegates, but they were required to obey the rule of the Congress. The result of this rule was that appointment as a delegate was not attractive to the professional "friend of the farmer" or the plain politician. Hence these self-seekers, who so sorely afflicted other farmer organizations at times, were never noticeable in the Farmers' National Congress during the first thirty years of its history.

Another rule of the Congress, strictly enforced, was that as soon as any member was nominated for any public office, or appointed to it, unless it was of an agricultural organization or the agricultural department of a state or the national government, he must resign as a member of the Congress.

It will be seen that the Congress was composed of men and women of such character — successful, highly intelligent farm people — that it would have unusual influence. Wm. H. Hatch, for twelve years chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture and who has to his credit so much legislation of great benefit to the farmer, said a short time before his death, "The Farmers' National Congress has more influence with the Congress of the United States than all other agricultural organizations combined." It was held in the highest esteem by foreigners, as I early discovered; and this was confirmed when I went abroad. Señor Romero, the Mexican Minister at Washington for a quarter of a century and for years dean of the diplomatic corps, attended the meetings of the Congress year after year, and was by special vote privileged to speak, and sometimes made good use of the privilege. James Bryce, who attended the meetings while he was Ambassador from the Court of St. James, said to me that he had never seen a more dignified gathering and that he would confess frankly that he was greatly surprised by the wide and accurate knowledge shown by its members. In a column article about the Congress the *Two Republics*, of the City of Mexico, said that the Farmers' National Congress was the greatest agricultural assemblage in the history of the world. Señor Romero had pronounced it the "ablest and most august."

Unfortunately after a time the Congress did not strictly enforce the rules I have mentioned and its membership, and especially its officials, commanded less and less respect. The Congress lost in influence and some years past it ceased to exist.

The Congress gave me invaluable aid in the campaigns I made for mail delivery to farmers, modern parcel post, good roads, and other things of benefit to farmers. It had the respect of the Congress of the United States and of the National administrations, whether Republican or Democratic, although it favored the measures Congress or the President might oppose.

A NOTABLE JOURNEY

In November 1889, I made to the South one of the most pleasurable and profitable trips of all my life. It was occasioned by a beautiful commission from Governor Fifer, of Illinois, appointing me a delegate to the annual meeting of the Farmers' National Congress in Montgomery, Alabama, November 13–15, 1889.

I was accompanied by four other Illinois farmers: Dennis Kenyon, J. H. Van Arsdale, James B. Foley and John Ball. Only two other Illinois delegates attended the meeting. We five assembled in the Governor's private office, and received his blessing or something similar.

Kenyon was one of the most extensive and wealthy farmers of the West. He had begun as a farm hand, working for the first of the noted Funk clan to come to Illinois. He was one of the most unassuming, diplomatic, jolly, lovable men I have ever met.

As we were going into the South, we held a solemn conclave just before we left Springfield, and each one was voted a title, to be assumed as we crossed the middle of the channel of the Ohio. Inasmuch as Kenyon had served in the Civil

War, stood six feet three in his stockings, and had a real soldierly bearing, we gave him the title of General.

Van Arsdale was an extensive farmer of the sort that do most of their farming away from home; the sort of "dirt farmer" that spends much time in throwing "dirt" at lawyers, capitalists, and Congress. He talked continually of agricultural bankruptcy, and the legislation necessary to save the toiling, sweating farmer masses from annihilation. As he had run for governor on some farmer ticket, we gave him the title of Governor.

John Ball was a scientific dirt farmer although he would not have believed it if someone had told him that he knew any science or was at all scientific in his practice. He was also president of a bank in a small town. He was somewhat overweight, slow, humorous, very fond of a joke, dependable, companionable. You wanted him to be your friend. He was grave; most so when about to say something humorous. Because of his solidity and gravity he was given the title of Judge.

(Kenyon, Van Arsdale, and Ball have been dead for some years. Eternal bliss to their gay, honest souls!)

James B. Foley is Scotch-Irish. Sometimes he is 100% Scotch. Occasionally he is even "a little more Scotch," so canny is he and wise of observations and philosophic of speech and ready with an apt answer. More often he is 100% Irish. I need not write more about him — you know why we called him Jim before an hour and loved him before the day was old, and I was happy to have him for room mate and occasionally for bedfellow. He was given the title of Major.

I was given the title of Colonel.

We were never addressed otherwise than by our proper titles by other members of the party after we reached midstream of the Ohio.

We spent two days at Chattanooga. General Kenyon, as a high private, had climbed up Missionary Ridge on a well known occasion, November 24, 1863. We marched into the

Chattanooga hotel in this order: General Kenyon; Governor Van Arsdale; Judge Ball; Colonel Stahl; Major Foley. General Kenyon, who wrote a beautiful hand, registered for all. He modestly refrained from giving himself any title, but he registered Gov. J. H. Van Arsdale, Judge John Ball, Col. John M. Stahl and Maj. James B. Foley. The clerk was ready to give us the "Ladies Parlor" for a smoking boudoir. Kenyon turned slowly, majestically to Governor Van Arsdale and inquired, "Want a room with bath, Governor?" "Well, General," replied Van Arsdale, "I'm accustomed to bath, but it really isn't necessary — if the hotel is crowded." At that "General" of "Governor" Van Arsdale the little negro bellboys fell over one another to get at our baggage and their smiles were as widespread as their ears would permit. The clerk assured us that everyone of us should have a bath if he had to build more baths in the hotel. In fact, we more than owned the hotel: we were given two towels apiece.

Our next stop was at Atlanta. We had given ourselves extra time for the trip to Montgomery, but we reached there thirty-six hours late. We were in luck to get there at all. It was the fault of Major Whidby.

I MAKE AND MEET SOUTHERN FRIENDS

MAJOR W. G. WHIDBY — I have reason to believe that he was a real, fighting major in the then "late unpleasantness" — was on the staff of the Atlanta *Daily Journal.* He had been for years one of the editors of the old, excellent *Southern Cultivator,* for which I had written regularly for years. I saw several glaring faults in him and doubtless I was not perfect in his sight, but we both were of opinion that the way to live long and happily is to enjoy the good qualities of our friends and ignore their faults. Here I am reminded of what that fine specimen of God's nobility, Isaac E. Switzer, Indiana farmer and legislator and gentleman, once said of jolly Bert Yocom, good life insurance agent, of pronounced characteristics: " We all think we would change Bert a lot if we were allowed to make him over, and when we were done he would not be as good as he is now."

I was entertained by about a score of Atlanta friends, but it was the entertainment of Major Whidby which almost wrecked me. Kenyon, Van Arsdale, Ball, and Foley were, with me, given generous attention during the day and evening. It was later, beginning with " Low Twelve " and high jinks, that I slipped away from the General, the Governor, the Judge, and the Major, to be guided by Whidby.

At that time there were several writers in Atlanta who had already gained a reputation and who later became famous, and two already famous — Henry W. Grady and Joel Chandler Harris. I am justified in saying that Grady " electrified the country " by his address at the annual dinner of the New England Society of New York City, December 22, 1886. In this address he said:

> The old South rested everything on slavery and agriculture, unconscious that these could neither give nor maintain healthy growth. The new South presents a perfect democracy, the oligarchs leading in the popular movement — a social system compact and closely knitted, less splendid on the surface, but stronger at the core — a hundred farms for every plantation, fifty houses for every palace — and a diversified industry that meets the complex needs of this complex age.
>
> The new South is enamored of her new work. Her soul is stirred with the breath of a new life. The light of a grander day is falling fair on her face. She is thrilling with the consciousness of growing power and prosperity. As she stands upright, full-statured and equal among the people of the earth, breasting the keen air and looking out upon the expanded horizon, she understands that her emancipation came because through the inscrutable wisdom of God, her honest purpose was crossed, and her brave armies were beaten.

Grady was managing editor of the Atlanta *Constitution* from 1880 until his death December 23, 1889. I was privileged to see him for a very few moments during our stay in Atlanta. He looked sick — much sicker than he would concede. I withdrew as soon as I well could. Whidby did not go with me. There was keen rivalry and some feeling between the *Constitution* and the *Journal* at that time. Aside from this, the two men differed so widely they would not have been friends. I had at times corresponded with Mr. Grady, he had commended a number of my articles, and had heartily endorsed me for Secretary of Agriculture. He received me with a warm greeting. I remember distinctly how he looked. His large, straightforward eyes first attracted attention. His face was smooth shaven. He was a little inclined to overweight. In manner and conversation he was frank. It was plain that he desired to be your friend. I doubt if any man ever had less of physical or moral fear.

When I saw him he was preparing the great address he made the next month before the Boston Merchants' Association. He was keenly desirous of knowing the real sentiment of the influential people of the North. Not that he feared to go counter to that sentiment; but he wished to be reassured that he would do the New South which he loved as he loved the Old South, good and not harm.

I hope that my young readers will read some biography of Henry W. Grady, and consider it well. If discouraged, as so many of us have reason to be at times, they may well consider this man who, " broke " after the failure of several enterprises, borrowed fifty dollars, gave twenty to his wife, and taking thirty went to New York City and got a job on the *Herald*. Nothing much more pathetic than his story of the trip and of the morning his first piece might, and might not, appear! Read that account, my friend, you who have failed and are sore discouraged, and weak, and half sick, and nigh friendless! Grady never knew the taste of tobacco or alcoholic drink. He was clean of speech and life. He was only thirty-nine when he died.

Another well known Georgian that I met at this time was Gen. John B. Gordon. He was Governor of the state in 1889. On more than one occasion he used his great influence as I requested. He was as gallant as any of the soldiers who brought fame to the Confederate States of America.

He was the most knightly man I have ever met. He was an able governor and Senator, an eloquent orator, a high-minded, patriotic citizen. He looked every inch the soldier; in every attitude the gentleman.

Whidby and Stahl called on Joel Chandler Harris. Harris was of such a friendly sort that Whidby accompanied me, although Harris had been on the staff of the *Constitution* since 1876. I was very desirous of meeting him. I had been told a great deal about his lack of stature and superabundance of red hair and freckles. I, only five feet, four, found that I did not have to look up to him. His hair was red, but I had seen redder hair. He certainly was well dusted with freckles on his face and hands. I did not find the careless dress I had been told about. Joel Chandler Harris was certainly well removed from the man who would give undue importance to clothes, but I found him neatly and modestly clothed. He had a round, full face, that plainly bespoke jollity. He had none of the "lean and hungry look." The most prominent feature of his mobile face were his eyes. Next came his heavy and half-pacific, half-aggressive mustache. He was living in the house known later and probably at that time as the "Wren's Nest" because some wrens had used for a nest the mail box at the front gate. The house is now a Joel Chandler Harris memorial and the wren's box is part of the exhibit. I visited the house in the summer of 1929 and at once recognized the "sitting room" in which we sat and in which Harris had been working, and the fireplace that warmed and lighted the room that evening forty years before — but it did not lighten the room as did the face and wit of our host. The Wren's Nest was the house, much enlarged, which he bought with five and one half acres of land in the far west part of Atlanta in 1880 for $2500, on monthly payments. The sales of the two Uncle Remus books had produced until 1884 enough money to enlarge the small house; and it had been further enlarged when I called in 1889.

At that time Harris did not know, I think, that the Uncle

HENRY W. GRADY

JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS

Remus stories were known to many peoples; that, as stated by Prof. C. Alphonso Smith, certainly a competent authority, " variants of the tar-baby story have been found among the Indians of North America, the natives of the West Indies, the Indian tribes of Brazil, the natives of Cape Colony, amongst the Bushmen, amongst the tribes of the lower Congo, in West Central Africa, amongst the Hottentots, and in the 'Jatakas' or 'Birth Stories' of Buddha." Variants of the Uncle Remus stories were found among the Moros. One of these legends, referring to the alligator, was recounted to an American army officer by Hadji Butu, chief adviser to the Sultan of Sulu.

Joel Chandler Harris was the fruit of romantic love. His mother was of the " quality." His father was an Irish railway track worker who departed for parts unknown — and there remained — when Joel Chandler was born. I feel sure that Harris admired and all the more loved both his mother and father because they had loved so bravely. If I were not sure of that I would not mention his father, although, to understand Joel Chandler Harris one must know that he was one half " wild Irish "; that his father was of those who believed in fairies and such things. I was indeed happy to meet the author of Brer Rabbit and the other creations of Uncle Remus. The hour was late for me, a farmer; but I am sure that it was not late for Harris or Whidby. I never spent a more enjoyable two hours with any man than those I spent with Joel Chandler Harris.

Harris wore his hat that evening. He wore it nearly always in the house, I was told. That was an old Southern planter custom.

I met another Georgian, already well known and later famous: Frank L. Stanton. He did not bubble over with joy when we called on him. He made it plain to me that he was not " reconstructed," as Grady was; that he disliked the name of Stanton — he hated Edwin M. and Elizabeth Cady; that what the South needed was a lot of Northern farmers to teach the Southern people how to work — and the way he said that indicated that he thought that was all the Northern farmers knew how to do; that he had worked as a farm hand and wood sawyer and in Georgia that meant degradation; that Rome (he was on the staff of the Rome (Ga.) *Tribune*) was not proud like Atlanta, but then Atlanta had a right to be proud — it had 65,000 population; and that Whidby could drink more whiskey and produce more "copy" than any other newspaper man in Georgia. I think that he and Whidby were good friends; that he and Grady were not; but of this last I am not at all sure. After the death of Grady he took a place on the staff of the *Constitution* and filled a "column" every day. He was one of the first, as he was one of the best, "column conductors." I hope that every one of my readers will be able to read his "Songs of the Soil" and to hear well sung his "Mighty Lak a Rose" and "Just A-Wearying for You." I will never forget the night I first heard them sung — in New Orleans. I do not think that Stanton meant all that he said that night; rather, morning. He was enjoying to the full — no double meaning there — his hurried trip to Atlanta and he was in a mood to talk freely and emphatically. If he had touched liquor at all, he was certainly not guilty of having taken too much, as that would have been defined in 1889. Frank L. Stanton was a gentleman, although careless in dress. I am aware that forty years ago a gentleman did some things that are frowned on in these mollycoddle days.

MY PICTURE JOURNEYS

Some time before November 1889, my picture had appeared in the *Farm Journal*. In those days the half tone was yet little used. There were few illustrations in magazines or books compared with today, and almost no pictures in the newspapers. A picture generally meant a wood cut or a steel engraving, and even the wood cut was slow and expensive. Wilmer Atkinson did not have many pictures of any kind in his *Farm Journal,* but he risked mine. Today it would be classed as an electrotype made from " a poor wood cut." Mr. Harrison, the managing editor of the *Southern Cultivator,* borrowed it to use in that publication. When I came to Atlanta with the General, the Governor, the Judge and the Major, Whidby put in the *Journal* a very long piece about us and our trip and he borrowed the Stahl electrotype from the *Cultivator* to adorn the piece. By the time the electrotype was released from the *Journal* press it was sadly worn and battered. One eye showed beyond doubt that I had been at an Irish wake or similar social function. At this time a corporation in Atlanta furnished "patent inside" or " boiler plate " to a long list of local papers. It transferred my battered features as best it could to a " plate " account of the visit of General (my Southern friends gave me that title) Stahl and his friends to the South. This was a lengthy and most flattering account; but my picture! Apparently they used the same old electrotype; apparently it was on a wood base and one of the rivets to hold plate and base together was located right in the middle of my forehead; and apparently this rivet had worked up until it was plain that at the exhilarating Irish function not only had my eye collided with a bottle, but some outsider (an Irishman does not carry a "gat") had shot me in such a way that my brains were certain to be damaged, assuming that I had any. I think my Southern friends sent me copies of at least fifty local papers, commending the flattering print matter, and saying things intended to be funny about my picture.

We five farmers, going from Springfield, Ill., to Montgomery, Ala., via Chattanooga and Atlanta, and proceeding leisurely on the way, were running true to form when we planned to take three times as much time as was necessary for our trip and did take even more. However, our time was not altogether wasted. We found profit as well as enjoyment in the trip. We talked freely with the Southerners we encountered. We found them exuberantly friendly. In 1889 there had not yet been much post-war intercourse between the people of the South and the North. This was especially true of the farmers. The Northerner was not sure how he would be received in many parts of the South. The days of Reconstruction, Negro Domination and The Carpetbagger, that had intensified the bitter feeling of defeat, were not far in the past. But the Southerners we encountered were, without exception, extremely friendly. I was not surprised. The *South and West* and also the *Journal of Agriculture,* were really Southern publications. The last named was published by the Chews, among the large slave owners of Mississippi in pre-war days, and fine, broad-minded, big-hearted men. As previously stated, I had made a good many trips over the South. I first saw some of the South when I went to the First Southern Exposition, at Louisville, in the summer of 1883. The three weeks spent there and at the Mammoth Cave and The Hermitage were crammed as full of education as any three weeks of my life. One incident stands out above all others: One day the governors of three states were at the exposition. Cotton was picked in the field, ginned, and sent to the exposition, and the evening of the same day the governors wore suits made from that cotton. I wanted very much to have a piece of that cloth, to send to my mother. I had bothered a great deal the girls that attended to the machinery used in the manufacture of cotton cloth, for it was all new to me, and had made friends with them. They stole a piece of the cloth I wanted and gave it to me. They could have sold it for fifty dollars and they were poor. At this exposition I got acquainted with a good many Southerners. They talked freely with the Illinoisan who wanted always to know. I got an insight into the Southern problems, feeling, hopes. In 1884 I had gone to New Orleans via Little Rock, Shreveport, and Alexandria, and returned through Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky. I had made other trips that took me to Texas, Georgia, and the Carolinas. Yet I found, as we made our slow progress to Montgomery, that the Southerners were even more cordial than I had anticipated. They were kind indeed when they found that we were delegates to the Farmers' National Congress. Southerners had been president of it up to that time. They were especially cordial to the General when they found that he was a Northerner who had fought in the Civil War. He and the Johnny Rebs had a continual love feast.

The meeting of the Congress in Montgomery was a notable event. We met in the chamber in the state house in which the Southern Confederacy was organized and in which Jefferson Davis took the oath as President of the Confederate States of America. We stood on the steps of the state house where he stood when he made his Inaugural Address. As my wife and I drove to Florida in the fall of 1927 we went out of our way to visit Montgomery. I wished again to see that city of beautiful recollections for me and to see the state house so rich in historical associations, and its wonderful hanging stairs, like those in the old state house in Iowa City, Iowa.

At the time of the meeting of the Farmers' National Congress in Montgomery, its president was Col. Reuben F. Kolb, of Alabama, a famous farmer and farm leader of his day. He was the typical Southern gentleman: erect, dignified, with a strong, ruddy face, and white hair and mustache. The secretary was B. F. Clayton, extensive Iowa farmer, ex-speaker of the Iowa House of Representatives; Kentucky born and with all the characteristics, physical and otherwise, even to the heavy white mustache (which, however, he later sacrificed), of the Southern Colonel of the novel and stage. I think it a great honor that he was my good friend for more than thirty years; that when the Congress authorized an assistant to him as secretary, he chose me for the first assistant secretary of the Congress.

WHAT THE FARMERS' NATIONAL CONGRESS STOOD FOR

WHILE I was a member of the Farmers' National Congress it gave little time to the production of farm products; and

I feel sure that was true of all of its history. It discussed the marketing of farm products, and it discussed more — in its early years much more — the interdependence of industries and the outside agencies affecting farming, such as transportation, tariff, currency, and immigration. This was just the side of farming that I had named " the distributive side of farming "; that I was sure was being neglected and which I had given much study. At the Montgomery meeting there was an address, I remember, on The Relation of Agriculture to Manufacture and Commerce, and another emphasizing the influence of transportation and manufacture on farming as an industry. At the meeting in Sedalia, Missouri, in 1891, the outstanding address was by William Freeman, of Maine, on The Relation of the Farmer to the Manufacturer and to Organized Bodies. The white-haired speaker bespoke the cultured gentleman by his face, his bearing, and his language. His address was one of the most eloquent I have ever heard. The climax was, in his peroration, his impassioned exclamation, " God bless the farmer's daughter! " It brought every delegate to his feet, cheering, and the audience in the gallery joined in the cheering for several minutes; and when Mr. Freeman attempted to resume, the applause broke out again half a dozen times.

I have before me a program of the meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1895. The subjects of some of the addresses are:

Bi-Metalism and How to Secure It, by Wm. Lawrence of Ohio, ex-Comptroller of the Currency, ex-Congressman; An American Marine: Its Utility, Creation and Maintenance, by W. W. Bates, of Colorado, author of two large volumes on The American Marine; The Secretary of Agriculture: What He Should Be and What He Should Not Be, by J. H. Brigham, Master of the National Grange; Agriculture in Mexico, by Señor M. Romero, Mexican Minister; The International Character of Modern Agriculture, by Baron Beno Reinhardt Freiherr von Herman, Agricultural Attaché to the German Embassy; An Export Bounty on

Farm Products, by David Lubin, of California; the Susceptibility of Animals to Soil and Climate, by Will B. Powell, of Pennsylvania; The Extension of Dairy Farming in the South, by Maj. Henry F. Alvord, Chief of the Dairy Division of the Department of Agriculture; Improvement of Public Highways, by Gen. Roy Stone, head of the Division of Roads, Department of Agriculture; Elements the Farmer Needs for Success, by Edward Atkinson, economist, of Massachusetts; Management of Agricultural Fairs, by George A. Stockwell, Secretary State Board of Agriculture and State Fair of Rhode Island; Nitrate of Soda in Agriculture, by Señor Julio M. Foster, of Chili; Agricultural Advertising, by E. E. Critchfield, president Critchfield Advertising Agency, Illinois; The Weather and Crop Service: Its Relation to The Farmer and The Market, by John R. Sage, of the U. S. Weather Service, Iowa; and The Commercial Relations of American Republics, by Señor Francisco Javier Yanes, of Venezuela, and J. A. Johnson, of Wisconsin, President National Association of Farm Machinery Manufacturers and Carriage Builders. Thirty-four years after that meeting a wise President is awakening, it is to be hoped, the American people to the importance of that last subject.

The foregoing will give some idea of the scope of the discussions of the Congress. At the first meeting I attended, or in some cases almost the first, the Congress adopted resolutions in favor of mail delivery to farmers; postal savings banks; modern parcel post; the preservation of forests and reforesting; an income tax; conservation of natural resources; a tariff commission; direct election of U. S. Senators; valuation of railways; an American merchant marine — some government aid if necessary; the franchise for women in municipal, state, and national elections; and an international conference on bimetallism — the use of both silver and gold as a circulating medium at a ratio to be agreed on. This last was as near as the Congress ever came to free silver. Of course resolutions on the parcel post or postal savings banks and such subjects were not adopted when no longer needed.

I have already spoken of the stand of the Congress on permanent road improvement. I introduced the first resolution on that subject brought before the Congress. This was at the meeting in Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1892. I was on the program of that meeting, my subject being Highway Transportation. The good roads resolution was hotly debated during a good part of two days, but was finally adopted.

The following resolution was adopted at the meeting at Savannah in 1893 and the Congress always indorsed the policy of co-operation therein recommended:

> Resolved, That we urge upon all who are interested in the business of agriculture and on those interested in pursuits on which agriculturists depend for supplies, to associate together in business organizations for the production of crops and supplies and for the transportation and marketing of the same.

The Congress believed in co-operative organizations. This resolution was adopted at the meeting in Oklahoma City in 1907:

> Whereas, Various agricultural organizations such as the Cotton Growers Co-operative Association, the Co-operative Live Stock Association, and the Farmers' Co-operative Elevator Association, are now in successful operation:
>
> Resolved, That we heartily commend all such organizations whose aim is to reduce the expense between producer and consumer.

And this was adopted at the meeting in Raleigh, North Carolina, in 1909:

> Resolved, That we endorse and recommend a system of storage and selling through co-operation, as far as practicable, as a means of maintaining prices on a profitable basis.

These resolutions are of much interest just now and deal with a subject bound to grow in interest as the Farm Board, recently created, functions along the lines laid down for it.

At the meeting in St. Paul in 1897 the Congress adopted this resolution:

Whereas, Enormous damage is caused by the floods of the Mississippi River, at different points along its course. And

Whereas, Under the Constitution of the United States the work of prevention can not be accomplished by agreement among the states directly interested, inasmuch as it expressly prohibits all compacts among the states. Therefore

Resolved, That the work of reclaiming the Mississippi River is truly national in its character, and it should be done by the national government.

Those resolutions would have been loudly acclaimed by the populace just thirty years later. The Congress was generally some years ahead of public opinion.

Year after year the Congress took the ground that whatever measure of tariff protection was accorded other industries, the same should be accorded to farming. At each annual meeting it adopted a resolution favoring the improvement of waterways, especially favoring a waterway permitting of ocean freighters' coming through the Great Lakes by way of the St. Lawrence River.

In this connection I will mention that in my address at the meeting in 1893 in Savannah, and which was on "Transportation of Farm Products," I called attention to the fact that "in the last census year the average charge of the railways for carrying one ton one mile was 9.22 mills, while for the same service the charge of the vessels of the Great Lakes was 1.3 mills."

I spoke on "Transportation of Farm Products" at the meeting in 1891 and received the formal thanks of the Congress. As a glimpse of some conditions then I will give half a dozen sentences from my address:

> We may lessen transportation charges by providing better roads. . . . Even the Interstate Commerce Commission has an inkling of the truth. It says: "The truth is that railways are built on borrowed capital." And in his "Economic Theory of Railway Location" Wellington says that "railways are always built on borrowed money up to the limit of what is regarded as their positive and certain minimum value." As I have already said, railway rates are low; yet nothing can be more certain than that they would be lower if they had to pay only a fair income on the actual cost of the roads.

> . . . Of the bonded indebtedness of the railways of Illinois, less than four percent, and of Iowa or Kansas or Nebraska less than three percent, is held in the state.

I opposed government ownership, which was rather popular at that time and later.

In his address to the Congress at its meeting in Indianapolis in 1899, ex-President Harrison said:

> I used to haul haycocks to the stack in the good old-fashioned way, by running a grapevine around them, with a trace at each end, hitched to the horse, and then putting a boy on top of it with a rope line to drive up along the stack and have it pitched up. These modern appliances I have no use for. There was a romance about the old way. If now and then you ran across a bumblebee nest in the course of your journey to the haystack it only added a pleasant excitement. I do rejoice, however, that you have a lighter mowing machine. I remember driving one of the old horse-killers; if you ran into a stump there was no way of backing off. The driver had to get down and by main strength pull the mower away from the stump, the horses being unserviceable for backing purposes. . . .

Shortly after he spoke we met and I told him that when I used the Buckeye Mower (which was notorious for its weight and strength) I did not back away from a stump; I pulled it out. He said that in 1888 he had heard some tall stories about my prowess as a farmer, but he had not heard that one. I said that when next he was President and I needed a job in the Cabinet or something like it, I could tell bigger lies than that. He thought that a man of my ability in the line indicated should have his reward, but he thought I would do best to apply to the Democrats — they seemed to get all the really able liars. As two good Democrats were among those with him, I enjoyed that last almost as much as they did. Harrison was supposed to be very cold and formal, but I never found him so.

Of course the Congress concerned itself with a number of things other than those shown by the resolutions and the subjects of addresses that I have given; but it was always of opinion that it would accomplish most if it concentrated on a few things; and always it was conservative, yet progressive, in its expressions and actions. Because of that it did not have the good will of the extremists; but it did have the respect and confidence of the solid people of all callings and of the Congress of the United States. A few moments ago I was looking through the report of a hearing before the Senate Committee on Agriculture, at which Miss Emma Sickles was testifying. She said that farmers were in favor of what she advocated. "Has the Farmers' National Congress indorsed it?" asked the chairman of the committee. "It has," was the reply. No other farmers' organization was mentioned.

Because the programs, both as to subjects and speakers, were left so largely to me to frame as long as I was an officer of the Congress, I was proud of the following editorial in the Chicago *Inter-Ocean:*

> The Farmers' National Congress has been fortunate in having as secretary or president John M. Stahl, who has managed to keep all partisan topics out of the calls and leaflets that have been issued under his direction, and thus through a period in which the agricultural community has been peculiarly assailed by the blandishment of the leaders of rival parties, the Farmers' National Congress has been a focus to which the most progressive farmers of all parties have been attracted, and by which their desires and opinions were communicated to the National Congress at Washington.

THE EXPORT DEBENTURE IN 1895

AT THE meeting in 1895 I gave David Lubin his first opportunity to address a national organization on the idea that obsessed him: an export bounty on farm products to balance the protective tariff on manufactures. His proposition had been indorsed by several local or state organizations, including the California Republican State Convention, the California, Oregon, Washington, Illinois, Missouri, Virginia, and Pennsylvania State Granges, and the boards of trade of several cities. Samuel Gompers had not condemned the idea and Lubin, knowing the esteem in which the Farmers' National Congress was held by Gompers, believed that if it indorsed his export bounty the American Federation of Labor would be much more inclined to do so. I was criticized severely for putting Lubin on the program of the Atlanta meeting. Unfortunately he had advocated, two or three years before, postage stamp railway rates on farm products, the postal deficit created thereby to be met by heavy additional taxation; and that long distance competition be overcome by providing for "the transportation of farm products in their natural state, raised within the United States, at a reduced rate, lowering the rate in inverse ratio to the distances from markets." Lubin knew that I was blamed for putting him on the program — I had not forgotten how a young Illinois farmer had been ridiculed when he had first proposed the delivery of mail to farmers — and Lubin knew it was that, and not that I was in accord with his proposals, that led me to put him on the program. He knew that many of his audience were hostile. When he spoke he trembled violently from head to foot. Of a truth it could be said that his knees shook. I have never seen another speaker so agitated. But he spoke well. Of course he spoke very earnestly. At times he spoke dramatically, eloquently. His address was given a respectful hearing and made a real impression. One fault he had, and a serious one: he could not stick to a proposition. The very next year he was at Budapest to advocate something resembling the International Institute of Agriculture which came into being in 1905. He said honestly that he got this idea from Dr. Max Sering, of Berlin University. But he did not push this for some years. When I was on the Continent in 1899 I heard of it from several different people. Something similar to his proposition was being considered. He was writing letters to some. In 1904 he returned to Europe and succeeded in interesting King Victor Immanuel III, who, January 29, 1905, wrote to Giolitti, favoring an international institute for the advancement of agriculture, and as the result of Lubin's earnest appeals in a dozen countries that he visited, on May 20, 1905, the delegates of forty governments met and on June 5 of that year adopted an organic treaty, to be ratified by their governments, that resulted in the International Institute of Agriculture, with headquarters in Rome. He died early New Year's morn, 1919, mourned by more than a few in many countries. I never regretted that I gave David Lubin, the Russian Jew by birth, loyal American by choice, internationalist of the true type, his chance at Atlanta.

The president of the Congress elected at the close of the Niagara Falls meeting, Harvie Jordan, then of Georgia and now of South Carolina, should have a tall monument erected to him by the South; for he conceived the idea of, and organized and led to success, the first movement to restrict the production of cotton that saved from bankruptcy thousands of Southern planters and changed the business of the South from loss to gain, the condition of the South from financial distress to prosperity. It dug the grave of "five cent cotton." I doubt if anything else in the history of the South during the last hundred years, leaving out any results of the Civil War, has been as beneficial to the industry, the finance, and especially the spirit of the South.

Possibly the ablest president the Congress had was ex-Governor Hoard, of Wisconsin.

MY PRESIDENCY

I SUCCEEDED Jordan as president. The first annual meeting at which I presided was at Rock Island, Illinois, in 1906.

In my annual address I confined myself almost altogether to what I had for years termed "The Distributive Side of Farming." In the fall of 1910 there was in the Chicago *Daily News* a full two column interview with me reported by Hollis Field. In the interview is attributed to me the phrase, "the distributive side or half of farming." Mr. Field said that I had coined the phrase. I never heard of it until it came to me and I used it. Perhaps the reader will think there is no credit due anyone for the phrase, and I must confess that it has never become popular. Nor has what it names received nearly the consideration it should have. Those that heard or read my Rock Island address thought that I took very advanced ground. Many of the friends and old members of the Congress feared that what I had said was too novel and radical and would injure the Congress. As a matter of fact, one half of what I advocated is already " old stuff " and has been in effect for some years. Nevertheless, the distributive side of farming is just as important now as it was then. It is the important thing for farmers to consider. They are waking up to that and have been, more and more, for years. I gave some time to the restriction of immigration, recommending practically such restriction as we now have; I spoke of the contempt of law, always a live subject in a Republic, and of growing importance now.

Of course the pictures of several of the most prominent members of the Congress appeared in the Rock Island papers. The leading paper, the *Argus,* had in its issue of the morning of the second day of the meeting a triple column cartoon of the president of the Congress, with his abundant whiskers — I seemed always to have a good season for whiskers — a big armful of corn stover justifying the enormous corn knife I held upraised in one hand while the other grasped a pumpkin and an ear of corn, all surmounted by a ten gallon farmer straw hat. At that time the pastor of the United Brethren in Christ church at Keister, Minnesota, published a little paper of very pronounced religious character. The cartoon just mentioned appeared on the front page of the November 1906 issue, with this reading matter in large type: Above — " After this Life — What? — Where?" At left side — " The Summer is Ended." At right side — " The Harvest is Past." Below — " And My Soul Is not Saved. How Sad."

That is not the only time I have been pictured as a horrid example, I fear. It was before prohibition and I think I honored sight drafts for the amount of the drinks for the force of fully eighty papers, the editors of which knew me. The Rock Island paper would never tell how the Keister preacher got the cut or why they let him have it, but that Rock Island paper boasted a mischievous bunch of editors and reporters and others, and I always had my suspicion that they knew how the picture was to be used. Well, I have the front page of the Keister paper — my picture and the reading matter occupied all of that page — together with the picture as it appeared with a lot of flattering stuff in the *Argus,* in a discarded frame I found in the basement, now all occupying a prominent place in the room in which I am writing this.

I will long remember an event of the Oklahoma meeting. As I retired from the presidency of the Congress and turned the gavel over to my successor, Col. E. W. Wickey, of Mississippi at that time, stepped forward "and in a few well-chosen words" presented me with a very handsome and valuable real Howard watch, which I am carrying this day. This was an evidence of appreciation and good will from the members of the Congress, and was as complete a surprise as it was welcome.

MY SUCCESSOR

MY SUCCESSOR, Beneham Cameron, of North Carolina, had been serving the Congress as first vice-president. He was one of the most charming and patriotic gentlemen I have ever met. It was he who nominated me for president at the meeting in Richmond, two years before.

Mr. Cameron was a fine example of the genial Southern gentleman. He was of one of the oldest and most respected families of the State and of the South. He was an extensive planter and interested in various enterprises.

The second meeting of the Congress at which he presided was in his home city of Raleigh, and the program, prepared by him, was a notable one.

One of the ablest and most admirable men that ever attended the meetings of the Congress as a delegate was John C. Cunningham, of North Carolina. He served for some years as vice president. It was characteristic of him that at the meeting in Raleigh he said in the course of a short, eloquent address:

> I want to make special reference to my friend, President Cameron, whom I have had the honor of knowing all my life, and who has reflected credit and honor on the old Scotch Cameron name. In the old land across the sea, as well as in our own land, it has included bankers, farmers, educators; and leaders in this city and this state in every good, high, and noble work.

That was well-deserved praise from a gratifying source.

During the Raleigh meeting I was a guest at a dinner given by President Cameron in his spacious home. James Wilson, Secretary of Agriculture; Hilary A. Herbert, member of the Cleveland Cabinet; the governor of the state; James Bryce, the British Ambassador; U. S. Senators and Representatives; a famous editor, and other distinguished people were guests. I was fortunate in being seated just across the corner of the table from the British Ambassador. Once a friend said that "John Stahl ought to know a lot; he has had the brightest men of twenty countries to educate him." It was an educational treat to listen to Mr. Bryce. Some of us had been especially invited to a very important function in a Raleigh theater after dinner: the presentation of a prize to Clarence H. Poe for having produced the best book by a Carolinian during the preceding two years.

At the Raleigh meeting Joshua Strange was elected president. He was an extensive Indiana farmer and had well served the Congress as first vice president. He was elected president by acclamation. It was a wise choice. His administration was able and influential.

I had been succeeded as secretary by Dr. George M. Whitaker, who did such effective work for a parcel post. He had been my faithful, generous assistant secretary for years and was first assistant secretary the last six years I was secretary. He was unanimously reelected at Raleigh and was secretary until he was elected president.

SOME ABLE, PATRIOTIC MEN

AMONG those that attended the annual meetings of the Farmers' National Congress as delegates were three Masters of the National Grange: J. H. Brigham, Aaron Jones, and Oliver Wilson. All three served the Grange ably and faithfully. Very few that have attained prominence in work for farmers have been as able and statesmanlike; none have been more loyal to farmers and farming, or more patriotic citizens of the United States. By their attendance at the meetings of the Farmers' National Congress they greatly honored that organization.

The Congress was fortunate in its treasurers. J. H. Reynolds, of Michigan, was one of the best raconteurs I have ever met. He was a good business man and devoted to the agricultural interests. On his death he was succeeded by Levi Morrison, of Pennsylvania, one of the best friends I ever had and I have met no man I would rather have for my friend. He served the public in offices of importance and served it well. When I received a telegram that he was dead and the funeral would be the next Sunday, I immediately arranged to attend the funeral. But it was a time of record-breaking snow. My train was so delayed that I did not reach his home until late in the afternoon, whereas the funeral services were at one P.M. As it was known that I was on the way, it was announced at the funeral services Sunday that there would be services on Monday also, at which I would speak. The largest gathering in the history of his home county assembled on Sunday; and almost as large a gathering on Monday, to which I spoke as best I could of my dear old friend. After the burial Monday I learned that when Mr. Morrison had made his will some years before he had requested in it that when he died I be informed of his death and if I came to the funeral my expenses be paid. On account of the death of his wife and other circumstances, he changed his will three times, but always it contained that request as a provision. My expenses were promptly paid; and long since the money was spent for flowers for sick office workers, for he remembered such of his acquaintance. For some years before his death he remembered with some gift or token more than five hundred persons each Christmas, nearly altogether poor boys and girls or who had been poor boys and girls when employed by him.

CONCERNING TWO PRESIDENTS

President Roosevelt took a keen interest in the Farmers' National Congress. The first time I met him was when I led a committee of the Congress to present to him the resolutions about legislation adopted at a recent meeting. Shortly after that I had evidence that he heartily approved of what I had said in an address about the conservation of natural resources. For years I had talked at farmer meetings about that and the reduction, if not the elimination, of wastes on the farm. They are both yet live subjects, of great importance to farmers and of importance to others. I met President Roosevelt several times and I think every time he urged me to back up every effort to awaken the people to the importance of conserving our natural resources.

I have from him a letter dated March 14, 1908, inviting me to participate in the Conference on the Conservation of Natural Resources to which he had invited the governors of all the States and the presidents of certain national organizations. I thought he was not aware that I had been superseded as president of the Farmers' National Congress by Beneham Cameron. As I was going to Washington in a few days to push along the modern parcel post cause a little if I could, I waited until I could call on the President to explain the situation. He appeared very desirous that I should attend the Conference and suggested that I come as the representative of other organizations of which I was president or in which I held some other official position. I have never met any other person that had the superhuman ability of Theodore Roosevelt to know things. In this interview I found that he was well informed about my work for farmers. Someone had told him about my making rails. I was astounded and he clearly enjoyed the situation. He took up the ax that stood behind his chair (with two tennis rackets) and I thought he would banter me to a chopping match. He said he would insist on my coming to the Conference " on general principles." I thanked him sincerely, realizing that I had stayed one minute over my time, and got out, intending to attend the Conference; but later I found this impossible.

At another time he talked to me about what I had been saying about the waste of water power and the failure to use streams in transportation; and on the stand taken on this by the Farmers' National Congress. I think he was of opinion I overestimated the importance of water transportation. I did, perhaps. I did not fully foresee the part water power would (and will) play in generating electric current. He heartily approved of what I had been saying about the shameful waste of forest cutting — I had land in northern Wisconsin and northern Michigan and was stirred by what I had observed — and also what I had been saying about reforestation; and he did not think I made what I said about that strong enough. He grew enthusiastic. I had only ten minutes in his office that time — Senator Cummins, who helped me so often, had obtained that for me. I wanted to talk about parcel post. When I was again on the sidewalk, after all of fifteen minutes in the President's office, I fear, I realized that instead of my talking about parcel post he had talked about conservation of natural resources! But I forgave him! I knew that his effort to awaken an interest in the waste of natural resources had back of it one of the wisest and most statesmanlike ideas that has come to any of our noted men. It is indeed lamentable that the work he began has been allowed to languish. Already the effect of bare territory on climate and in the greater force and extent of floods as well as the increased impoverishment of lands by erosion, is more serious than all but a few realize.

Because I have been a member of the Authors' Club, London, for many years past, I am sent the London papers giving accounts of the semi-monthly dinners of that club. At a recent dinner Lord Cranworth was the guest of honor and he was reported as saying that President Roosevelt was " a wonderful man who made a great impression on every one with whom he came in contact." His judgment was right.

I was agreeably surprised by the favorable reviews of my books on the War of 1812 in such papers as the *Boston Transcript* and the *New York Post.* Naturally I was pleased also to find that the books aroused no little editorial comment, and that Gen. Leonard Wood was warm in his praise of " The Battle of Plattsburg." But no other praise gave me as much happiness as that in a letter from Theodore Roosevelt, in which he said: " I have just read your book on ' The Invasion of the City of Washington.' I think it is admirable. I wish it could be circulated throughout all our country. If you come to New York let me see you."

It was because such men as President Roosevelt (only there were no others like him) relied on the Farmers' National Congress to express the wishes and opinions of the thinking, progressive farmers of the country, that the Congress was very careful indeed about the action it took on public questions and was thought by some noisy " farm leaders " to be altogether too conservative.

My preparation of the programs of the annual meetings of the Congress not only led to correspondence with Presidents but in one notable case with a President-to-be when he had not yet held any political office whatever; and because of this I was sometimes accused of being the "original Woodrow Wilson man." I wished him to address the Congress in 1910 — I was asked to prepare the program that year, although my title at that time was Legislative Agent. He did not seem disposed to make the round trip to Nebraska at his own expense. I wrote him again asking him to send a letter to be read at our meeting, and stating that the farmers were looking around for a good candidate for President in 1912. He replied:

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

PRESIDENT'S ROOM

September, 26, 1910

My Dear Mr. Stahl:

I need not say that I warmly appreciate your kind reply to my letter, but I know that you will understand me and take me at my word when I say that I am particularly anxious just now not to belie myself by seeming to be looking for a wider influence, as if I were thinking of anything except my immediate duty in connection with the campaign here and my possible service as Governor of the State.

I am a bad hand at best in writing letters with no audience before me and no consciousness of an audience, and I should only seem, I am sure, to be expressing vague and therefore not very vital views.

I am sure that you will believe me entirely sincere in this plea.

Very cordially yours
WOODROW WILSON

Mr. JOHN M. STAHL,
Chicago, Ill.

One thing is sure, if I was not the "original Wilson man," I was a long way ahead of Colonel House and other politicians who made Wilson the candidate and are supposed to have first suggested to him that he be a candidate for President.

CHAPTER XVII

THE NATIONAL CIVIC FEDERATION

THE BEGINNING

SO MANY important events in the history of Chicago date from "the time of the World's Fair" that it is not strange that one must so date the arrival of Ralph M. Easley in the Windy City. He came from Hutchinson, Kansas, where he had owned and ably edited the *News* from 1883 to 1891 and had been postmaster from 1882 to 1887. When Mr. Easley came to Chicago he already knew some of the prominent people of that city. He had brains, and the fierce urge to do something. He also had resource and energy. Such a man will always soon have a job doing something richly worth while. In 1893 Easley conceived of and organized the Chicago Civic Federation. As long as Ralph M. Easley remained in Chicago (and he remained there until 1900) it was the most aggressively active beneficial organization in the history of the city. He and I spent our early youths only a few miles apart, and each had finished his schooling in the Quincy, Illinois, High School, but we were not aware of this until years after we first met in 1893. This meeting was at the time of the organization of the Chicago Civic Federation, with Lyman J. Gage, then the financial leader of Chicago, as president, and Mrs. Potter Palmer as vice-president. Mrs. Palmer succeeded Gage as president. Easley thought he needed a farmer in his organization and he hit on me, I suppose because at that time I was making more of a stir than anyone else who could prove that he was a farmer.

Of course I was put on committees — Easley knows better than anyone else in all the world the uses of committees. In addition to the city-wide organization, the Chicago Civic Federation had a ward organization in each ward.

In 1900 Easley wished to do something much greater than it was possible to accomplish in Chicago. Compared with New York or Philadelphia or Boston, Chicago was poor. Easley went to New York City and in November 1900, organized the National Civic Federation.

Recently I came across a mimeographed page, signed by him, setting forth briefly the proposed objects and plan of the National Civic Federation and naming a Committee on Organization of sixteen to pass on said objects and plan and to organize the Federation. The committee of sixteen was composed of fifteen eminent men of the highest character and outstanding achievements, some of more than a national reputation — and farmer Stahl. The Committee was: Franklin H. Head, president Chicago Civic Federation; Franklin MacVeagh; Cyrus G. Luce; John W. Ela; John M. Stahl; William P. Wilson; Paul J. Maas; William Dudley Foulke; William R. Harper; Frank W. Gunsaulus; Edward J. McDermott; and Ralph M. Easley. This is the order in which the names appear on the letterhead used during the organization of the National Civic Federation. All parts of the country were represented.

Easley had exactly the right idea of a committee. Doubtless you have heard, dear reader, that the only committee that functions effectively is one composed of five persons, four of whom are at home sick abed. Easley knew that the committee that accomplished any notable undertaking is composed of one able, hard-working member and all the other members mere names. He knew that if the National Civic Federation were promptly organized, he must do the job; and that if he did the job he must not be interfered with or bothered by others. Also, if he alone did the work it would be done to his liking. He was careful to select as members of the Committee on Organization fifteen persons who would be as willing as he that he should do all the work. The committee agreed with him enthusiastically and unanimously. He started the National Civic Federation on its life of eminent usefulness to capital and labor, manufacture and agriculture, transportation and finance; on its course of worthy achievement as well as high endeavor. For such a job there was probably no other person in all the United States quite so well fitted as Ralph M. Easley.

Of course it was purely accidental that some of the offices of importance were filled by multi-millionaires who would make large — large in the eyes of the Westerner — contributions to the treasury in consideration of the honor conferred, and whose names secured liberal newspaper publicity. It will be remembered that Easley had been a daily newspaperman.

Among the early presidents of the National Civic Federation were Marcus A. Hanna, Andrew Carnegie, August Belmont, Seth Low, Victor Macy, and Alton B. Parker.

The most important officer was "Chairman of the Executive Council." From the beginning that officer was Ralph M. Easley. As a prominent labor leader once said to me, that office made Easley "the whole works." And I doubt if any other man in the United States could have filled that difficult position as ably as it was filled by Ralph M. Easley. He has uncanny tact, diplomacy, force, and executive ability.

CONFERENCE ON TRUSTS

The Chicago Civic Federation held, in Chicago, September 13–16, 1899, a very important conference on Trusts. At that time trusts were the livest problem of the industrial and economic life of the United States, and they were regarded with apprehension by the large majority of the people. Real calamities were predicted — and widely feared — if they were not stamped out. The most drastic measures were advocated. The trust must be outlawed.

A score of eminent men, Senators and Members of the

House, governors, judges, economists, and labor leaders, spoke at this conference. I must confess that I think the ablest address was by Samuel Gompers. John Mitchell also spoke exceedingly well. I was on the program as a representative of the farmers, and was introduced by Oscar S. Straus, who was presiding. His introduction was one of the many items in my education about the diverse views held in various parts of our widely extended country. In the Midland and the West we thought farming so important that it should always be given much consideration. When he introduced me Mr. Straus remarked that in this country farming was an important industry and that farmers were interested in trusts, and therefore it had been thought proper to put a farmer on the program. What he said was somewhat flavored with apology; but that was mild compared with the tone in which he said it and his deprecatory manner. At that time farming in this country was of some importance compared with some other industries I might have mentioned to Straus; and most assuredly farmers were interested in trusts, for they were the greatest sufferers from the higher prices put into effect by the trusts.

In my address I spoke of the trust as I actually saw it; as "the latest device for doing things in a large way"; "the latest advance in a steady, persistent movement that has dominated the industrial development of the past one hundred years"; and I was sure that while the trust might "be destroyed in form, I do not believe that it can be destroyed in essence" because it "is constantly being proved that doing things in a large way is the most economical way." Hence I thought the trust should be made our servant rather than it should be destroyed. I was sure that "anything that increases the productivity of mankind is a good thing and should work good" for "whatever increases the productivity of human labor gives man more to enjoy and more time for recreation"; and that if the trust was doing more evil than good it was a challenge to direct it more wisely by laws carefully considered. Finally, I was sure the best correction of trust evils would be the competition that would spring up among trusts. I was sure of this because the trust was the means of most effectively utilizing the unusual abilities of the few, who should direct; and these would always be competitors. They, of all men, would wish to do better than others.

Of course I was severely criticized. It was said that I was altogether too moderate; I had sold out the farmers to the trusts; or if I had not been paid for doing this, I was at least too timid. Time disproves and teaches. My views would not be regarded today as they were thirty years ago.

I was a member of several of the committees of the Chicago Civic Federation. One of them was to study the conditions of the poor, preliminary to measures, including legislation, to improve those conditions. The chairman of the committee was Mrs. Potter Palmer. Other members were two labor leaders whose names I cannot recall, and Mrs. Mary J. Wilmarth, a woman of wealth and culture, of whom it was well said by the Chicago *Tribune* when she died in 1919, aged 82, that " for more than half a century she has been identified with practically every movement to improve social conditions in Chicago."

Very early in the history of this committee Mrs. Wilmarth and I made a " survey " — that word was used and misused then almost as much as " reaction " was a quarter of a century later — of some poor families. In one family the wife and mother complained that the family did not have enough to eat. Inasmuch as the husband and also the eldest son were employed and at good wages, Mrs. Wilmarth was led to inquire and advise. She told the woman that for the Wilmarth dinner the evening before there had been purchased for ten cents a fine soup bone — that was possible then! — from which a plate of good, nourishing soup for each member of the family had been made. The woman at once became angry. She expressed her opinion of Mrs. Wilmarth and all of her kind in words far more forceful and picturesque than they were elegant; and she made good use of real swear words to emphasize that she would not feed her family on slops made by cooking bones; her husband and son worked hard and they had to have for breakfast and supper a good thick beefsteak fried till it was done. And Mrs. Wilmarth and her like were welcome to know also that her husband and son and the rest of them had plenty of good whiskey and beer to drink. They had to have it to keep up, for they worked hard; and they didn't want any advice from rich people that did not know what work was — and she looked straight at me, too.

We withdrew, and I was elated: I had been classed among the rich! And I cannot recall that in all my life I was harder pressed for money to meet bills than I was at that time!

Mrs. Wilmarth was not elated. She was beginning to understand that she would be defeated in her efforts to help many of the poor because they preferred the conditions that made them poor and they could not be helped because they would not help themselves.

It was a friend of hers who was so moved by the truthfully reported distress of a large family — no food, no fuel, insufficient clothing, and rent in arrears — that she sent the family thirty-five dollars; all she could possibly spare. Later she found that the thirty-five dollars was spent in one day for a big feast of steak and cake and the fixin's — total cost ten dollars; and the rest for a gaudy, highly colored, large picture with an enormous gilded frame that a salesman brought to the two room shack. Doubtless the donation of thirty-five dollars was tipped off to him.

The old hit-and-miss sympathetic charity was a poor article. It may have honored the hearts, but it certainly convicted the good sense, of the charitable people. More and more charity has been made businesslike; sensible and systematic and intelligent; and it accomplishes a great deal more of good and less of harm, and at less expense.

INDUSTRIAL UNDERSTANDING AND NEAR-PEACE

I BELIEVE that the National Civic Federation did its greatest work in reducing the antagonism between employer and employee — an antagonism that was responsible for some hundreds of strikes in the United States every year; and they, in turn, resulted in great loss to both parties to those strikes, and often in yet greater loss to the non-participants.

No one knew better than Easley the power, almost supernatural, in a good dinner. If you would make a bitter enemy a warm friend, fill, if you can, his stomach with choice viands. The effect would be conclusive if the amended Constitution did not forbid altogether the additional effort that in small measure makes the result certain and complete. At the time of the organization of the National Civic Federation the feeling between employers and employees in manufacture and transportation was bitter indeed. The Homestead Strike, called by the workingmen the "Homestead Massacre," was only a few years in the past — that strike started July 2, 1892, and the conflict between the strikers and the one hundred Pinkertons from Chicago was July 6. I think that no other strike in the history of this country produced quite as bitter feeling. This feeling was in the hearts of workingmen everywhere. The strike would never have occurred had Carnegie not been in Scotland. The strikers could not get his address. His associates in the management of the Carnegie Steel Co. were certainly far from blameless. After the "massacre," the workmen employed in his mills learned his address and cabled him, "Kind master, tell us what you wish us to do and we shall do it for you." Unfortunately Carnegie was ignorant of all the trouble for more than two weeks after the workmen and the Pinkertons had been slain and until after Hugh O'Donnell, the chairman of the Strikers' Advisory Committee, had been imprisoned and released. Let it be said right here that O'Donnell was a wise leader, of a conciliatory disposition, moderate in his purposes, and if the heads of the Carnegie Steel Company in Pittsburgh had been possessed of one fourth his good sense and purpose there would not have been any strike. Unfortunately the truth about Andrew Carnegie and the Homestead Strike was for years so generally concealed that at this date it appears incredible. The feeling against him in some quarters was more bitter than against anyone else.

At the time of the Homestead Strike William Weihe was president of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers, the national organization which controlled the workers in the Homestead steel mills and the workers in such mills throughout nearly all of the United States. He, too, was a wise, temperate leader, entitled to the admiration of the workers and all interested in their welfare.

At the residence of Andrew Carnegie in New York City, April 5, 1907, was held a meeting which was called the "Industrial Peace Evening." I am sure this was the peak of the able and successful and therefore truly glorious effort of the National Civic Federation for industrial peace. Nearly four hundred attended the meeting; they were among the most eminent labor leaders, employers, publicists, economists, educators, and legislators of the United States. August Belmont, president of the Federation, presided. And the meeting was attended by William Weihe, then holding an official position on Ellis Island, the former "leader of the Homestead Strike." He and Mr. Carnegie stood up together! Andrew Carnegie was always immaculately dressed. He was the best dressed man I ever had an opportunity to observe. His tailor should have a medal. Perhaps needless to say that "Bill" Weihe (as I always heard him called) was not meticulous in his dress. Weihe was more than six feet tall and broad-shouldered. As Mr. Easley says, "when Mr. Carnegie and he stood side by side it was a remarkable picture; but, for some reason which I do not understand, we haven't any photograph of those two men standing together." That was a sad slip on the part of Ralph M. Easley; and the only one I ever knew him to make. The meeting of Carnegie and Weihe may well be said to have been "historic." As late as that evening at the residence of Mr. Carnegie it was not generally understood that he was blameless in the Homestead Strike. Often, when the fact that he was in Scotland and ignorant of all the events leading up to the strike and of the events of the strike was brought forward, I have heard workingmen say, "Oh, that's all a lie; the papers will publish anything for the big steel men," or words to that effect. When he and Weihe stood up together Mr. Carnegie explained that he was absent in Scotland and altogether ignorant of the strike until after the unfortunate occurrences and that he and Mr. Weihe had never met before. Up to that late date the labor leaders were, with the exception of a score, notably among them Gompers, Morrison, and Mitchell, not at all anxious to be shown fraternizing with Andrew Carnegie; and it is my guess that Mr. Easley has no photograph of Carnegie and Weihe standing up together for the reason that Weihe "side-stepped" the photograph, effectively if not gracefully. Later than 1907 the majority of labor leaders were well aware that they did not add to the confidence the workers had in them by putting their feet under the same piece of mahogany that sheltered the feet of certain big employers of labor, or even by being seen in their company. I am inclined to think that the biggest achievement of the National Civic Federation was bringing the big employers and the labor leaders together. Ignorance of one another is responsible for nine tenths of the ill-feeling among men and peoples. Knowledge of one another will, fortunately, never eliminate from men their disposition to fight; but the increase in the facilities for travel, notably by the improvement of the means and methods of air travel, will eliminate that which has been responsible for three fourths of the wars between classes and nations.

SOME NOTED MEN

I WAS keenly interested in the labor leaders. I thought John Mitchell, president of the United Mine Workers of America, the most interesting as he was certainly the most emotional and handsome. He had very black hair and eyes. Like Gompers, he was without mustache or beard. His mouth was mobile and his lips spoke before he uttered a word. He was from Illinois and we had mutual friends in the towns along a stretch of the Illinois River. I thought him the most likable of the labor leaders.

Undoubtedly Gompers was the most able of them all. He held for so many years his place of leader because of ability, because he was not the sort that can follow, and, perhaps most of all, because of his boldness and earnestness. He would modify his action and his recommendations for the sake of that industrial peace that he was sure would be a greater benefit than industrial war to the workingmen, but he would not shade his expression of his convictions because he could not modify those convictions and he was honest. That was writ large on his broad, heavy face, and he had a tell-tale mouth.

Warren S. Stone, Grand Chief of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers; J. J. Hannahan, Grand Master of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen; William D. Mahon, president of the Amalgamated Association of Street and Electric Railway Employees of America, were able men of fine countenance, intelligent, and all three of them with a jolly twinkle in their eyes that did not belie their natures; and their heavy mustaches were of the sort that bespeak a disposition for peace rather than war. Naturally I was interested in James M. Lynch, president of the International Typographical Union, of massive top-head, having all the appearance of the president of a big bank or manufacturing establishment; and in Martin P. Higgins, president International Pressmen's Union, whose face and build and manner fitted his name and bespoke force and aggressiveness.

These men were well dressed, well mannered, at ease in any company, and not one wore a beard. They looked entirely different from some of the British labor leaders, for example, who in face, dress and manner showed the difference between our workingmen and those of other countries. Once, in London, I talked with some carpenters as they were quitting their work in the evening. I could scarcely understand what they said. "Why do you not speak as so many do here?" I was bold and irritated enough to ask. "Oh, their language is not for the loikes of us," was the reply. Our labor leaders that I met, with two exceptions, used beautiful English.

INDUSTRIAL UNDERSTANDING AND NEAR-PEACE

YEAR after year Samuel Gompers was the first vice-president of the National Civic Federation; and prominent in it were John Mitchell; Frank Morrison, who has been for so many years the able and conscientious secretary of the American Federation of Labor; the other labor leaders I have named; and other prominent officials of labor organizations. These men met amicably and counseled with the greatest capitalists and the largest employers of labor in the United States.

Rather prejudiced at first, as a western farmer could scarcely avoid being, against the big eastern capitalists, especially those who were responsible for "monopolies" and trusts, *a fortiori* if they had Wall Street connections, I came to respect the honesty as I admired the simplicity and sincerity of these men; Carnegie the most of all.

The National Civic Federation did more than can be credited to all other agencies in the history of this country to bring about a better understanding between capital and labor, and which resulted in that collective bargaining which has done so much toward the elimination of strikes. When such men as Andrew Carnegie and Samuel Gompers met in the conference and small meetings and at luncheons and dinners of the National Civic Federation, they found one another honest and wishing no more than what was right; they came to respect one another, even to like one another, even to like one another very much. Each side found it possible to yield. Those who knew them know that it was inconceivable that Carnegie or Gompers should yield the least of principle; but they soon found, when they met under the amicable and generous influences of the National Civic Federation, that they could yield in policy and procedure in order to obtain the great gain of peace in industry and trade. Senator Marcus A. Hanna was Chairman of the Permanent Board of Arbitration of the Federation.

Some time after it was organized, the National Civic Federation selected an Executive Committee of forty-five, fifteen " On the part of the Public," fifteen " On the part of Employers," and fifteen " On the part of Wage Earners." For some years I was one of the fifteen to represent the public. One of the pictures I prize is made up of all the officers and the executive committee of the Federation. I will name my associates in this picture, because they show the influence the Federation would have: Andrew Carnegie, William H. Taft (then President of the United States), Alton B. Parker, Seth Low, Elihu Root, Samuel Gompers, August Belmont, Frederick D. Underwood, Archbishop John Ireland, James Speyer, Warren S. Stone, William R. Willcox, Melville E. Ingalls, James Duncan, John Mitchell, Clarence H. Mackay, Franklin MacVeagh, Benjamin Ide Wheeler, W. S. Carter, William D. Mahon, James O'Connell, Charles S. Barrett, Rt. Rev. D. A. Goodsell, Marcus M. Marks, W. G. Lee, A. B. Garretson, Samuel Mather, W. C. Brown, George W. Perkins, J. J. Bachelder, Charles A. Moore, David R. Francis, James W. Lynch, Nicholas Murray Butler, George B. Cortelyou, Isaac N. Seligman, Timothy Healy, Cornelius N. Bliss, Alexander H. Revell, Dennis A. Hayes, Joseph F. Valentine, Frank A. Vanderlip, P. H. Morrissey, John Hays Hammond, Marvin Hughitt, Henry Phipps, Ellison A. Smyth, John F. Tobin, William B. Huber, Otto M. Eidlitz, D. L. Cease, E. R. H. Seligman, and Ralph M. Easley.

In October 1903, I spoke at the National Civic Federation's conference on Industrial Peace. Other speakers were Senator Marcus A. Hanna; John Mitchell, president United Mine Workers; Archbishop John Ireland; E. P. Ripley, President Santa Fé Railway; Alfred Moseley, English trade unionist; David R. Francis, President St. Louis Fair; Oscar S. Straus, President New York Board of Trade; Edward E. Clark, Grand Conductor Brotherhood of Railway Conductors; James H. Eckles, ex-Comptroller of the Currency; Samuel Gompers, President American Federation of Labor; and P. H. Morrissey, Grand Master Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen.

I give the names of these speakers and their positions — the memory of man is treacherous — to show the caliber of those who participated in the conferences of the National Civic Federation. Certainly a conference participated in by such men had a real effect in bringing industrial peace; at least, in reducing industrial hostility.

Each year the Federation had an annual meeting of three days, with a banquet. It had conferences each year. It did not seek an attendance beyond a hundred or so, but those that participated were outstanding leaders, and what they said and the decisions of the meetings and conferences were widely published by the newspapers and carried much weight.

CONFERENCE ON UNIFORM STATE LEGISLATION

In 1910 the National Civic Federation had a conference on uniform state legislation in Washington. This Conference started influences and crystallized sentiments of much force and wide extent.

A letter signed by D. L. Cease, Secretary of the Federation (I remember that, at an annual meeting of the Federation in New York City, I was one of the nominating committee that nominated Mr. Cease for secretary) and dated January 13, 1910, says:

> At the first session, the meeting will be called to order by Hon. Seth Low, President of The National Civic Federation, who will explain the inception of the movement and the interest of the Federation in the subject. President William Howard Taft will deliver the opening address, followed by Judge Alton B. Parker, ex-president of the American Bar Association and Chairman of the Committee on Program for the Conference, and Governor Augustus E. Willson, Chairman of the Committee on Arrangements for the Conference of Governors.

I reached Washington the evening before the conference opened in the Belasco Theater, the morning of January 17. Being only a farmer, although I had been from the beginning one of the Executive Committee of the National Civic Federation, it never occurred to me that any prominence would be given me. Soon the notables came on the stage: Samuel Gompers and John Mitchell, the two most prominent and popular labor leaders of that time; Elihu Root, William R. Willcox, James Speyer, Isaac N. Seligman, Prof. J. W. Jenks, Gov. Augustus E. Willson, John Hays Hammond, and others. Seth Low, president of the National Civic Federation, and Alton B. Parker escorted to the stage William H. Taft, President of the United States. Taft, Low, Willson, and Parker spoke. Then Judge Parker was nominated for temporary chairman and to my great surprise I was nominated for temporary secretary. I was all the more gratified because I was nominated by John Mitchell, for whom I had a great affection. At the afternoon session the committee on permanent organization reported and Judge Parker was named as permanent chairman and John M. Stahl as permanent secretary, and unanimously elected. I had two assistants: Sereno S. Pratt, of New York, and Jerome Jones, of Georgia. John Hays Hammond was treasurer.

A pleasant episode of this conference was a dinner at the home of John Hays Hammond attended by the governors attending their conference on uniform state laws — some thirty of them; and also the Secretary of the Treasury, Seth Low, August Belmont, Alton B. Parker, Samuel Gompers, John Mitchell, Timothy Healy, Rear Admiral Chadwick, I. N. Seligman, James O'Connell, James Speyer, Marcus Marks, John F. Dryden and others, a fine mixture of capitalists and labor leaders.

The invitations to the dinner specified a certain hour, of course, and being a farmer I thought they meant what they said. So did one of the governors. The result was that we arrived at the Hammond residence fifteen minutes before the other guests arrived. They had met somewhere and came in a body. The secretary of the conference was so busy that he missed the information that the guests were to do this. Mr. Hammond was compelled to excuse himself for a few minutes during our wait for the other guests and the governor satisfied his curiosity as to the length of the capacious drawing-rooms by "stepping" them as we farmers step off land. He stepped them three times and reached the conclusion that they were the longest drawing-rooms he had ever encountered. The governor was very tall and thin and his coat had very long tails even for a spike-tail. I got a hearty and unrestrained laugh every time he "stepped" those rooms.

In April 1914, it was decided at a meeting of the Federation to appoint a committee for the study of agricultural conditions. At this meeting Secretary of Agriculture Houston pointed out that there were numerous plans for rural betterment proposed: plans for rural organizations, for co-operative enterprises specifically for the marketing of farm products, also for rural credits, for rural sanitation, for improvement of the social and intellectual side of country life, for good roads, and for yet other objects; and he took the ground that the objective should be the improvement of these organizations and better methods and means suggested to them to be used in their work. I was in hearty sympathy with this, for I had been of opinion for years that the farmer had too many inefficient organizations.

I WAS NAMED AS A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE

I REMEMBER that I attended an informal conference about this department to study agricultural conditions in the office of the National Civic Federation. This was probably April 6 or 7, 1914. I remember discussing it thoroughly with Samuel Gompers. I was amazed at his knowledge of farming and farm economy. I had previously discussed a variety of subjects with him, but never before had we talked definitely and at length about farming, the distributive as well as the productive side. I heartily wish that the so-called and too often actual farm leaders of today had the grasp of farming that Gompers had. He was a wonderful man.

I take up some clippings as they have been placed on my desk — one about the fourteenth annual meeting of the National Civic Federation in December 1913, at which the speakers were Samuel Gompers, John Hays Hammond, Prof. J. W. Jenks, A. B. Garretson, and John M. Stahl, and the subject of hot discussion was the Sherman anti-trust law. At another meeting — I can not tell you the year from the clipping — Gompers and I again got the headlines and other speakers were Marcus M. Marks, August Belmont, Alton B. Parker, Seth Low, Dr. Harvey W. Wiley, Dr. Carl L. Alsberg, and Dr. A. D. Melvin. Another clipping gives the list of those at the residence of Mrs. Potter Palmer, on invitation to participate in a "Conciliation Conference" — to bring capital and labor, employer and employee amicably together. The first three names on the list as it appeared in the Chicago and other papers are Mayor Edward F. Dunne (afterward governor of Illinois), James B. Forgan, president of the largest bank in the city, and myself.

I mention this and my inclusion in other meetings or committees made up of men distinguished in manufacture, commerce, transportation, education, economics and public service, because they show that I had helped to secure for farmers and farming a consideration that had rarely indeed, if ever before, been shown them in the United States. I rejoiced that my pen and voice had been so used that as the representative of the farmers I was thought not unworthy to present their case in conferences and public meetings participated in by the most eminent of other classes and the most exalted of public officials reaching up to the President of the United States.

My business affairs had become complex and of considerable magnitude, and it seemed to me that it was advisable that I withdraw from any active connection with all organizations except those in the affairs of which I might participate actively without leaving Chicago. Furthermore, I had grown more and more interested in the arts, and especially in literature. I had gained a wide acquaintance among authors and enjoyed it keenly. I thought about and began planning an organization of the authors of the Midland of the United States, composed of delegates sent from state organizations of authors. Of this later.

The last meeting of the National Civic Federation that I attended was addressed by Theodore Roosevelt, ex-President of the United States. As he bustled and hurried — so far as I ever saw him he always bustled and hurried — from the room I happened to be near the door. He gave me a quick glance, and the Roosevelt teethy smile, and said, "Hello, farmer!" He was a real friend of the farmers and of course never was given credit for it.

I remember the National Civic Federation and its directing genius with deep gratitude. I gained much from my occasional contacts with the brainy men and women that composed its active membership, and formed friendships that I will always highly prize.

CHAPTER XVIII

FARMERS AND FARMING

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

I WAS born and reared on a farm and until a few years ago was always directly interested in farming. For nearly forty years I was a farm owner. The first money I was able to save I put into an equity in Kansas land. I am sure it was a safe investment for it is there yet and doubtless will be through all time and eternity. I "became my own man" and my wages from henceforth were my own, August 24, 1881. That day I plowed from before sunrise until sunset for seventy-five cents and two meals. That was the top wage for a farm hand in that part of the country half a century ago. My school began the third Monday of September of that year. I rented a large field at four dollars an acre cash rent and managed to get it into wheat that fall. I put the ground "in apple-pie condition," doing what work I could myself; some of it on Saturdays and on moonlight nights after my school began; hiring a team and implements. Some of the work I had to have done by others. I bought the very best seed and ran it through a fanning mill. The field was drilled the last of September and I have never seen a more promising field of wheat than that one was that fall. As you know, the first settlers came to that part of the United States in the late 1820s and early 1830s. Since that time until this date there has been just one year in which the wheat crop was a failure. It was the year in which I should have harvested thirty bushels per acre. It took all the money I got for teaching for five months and for three months of telling the readers of farm papers how to farm profitably, including the raising of big wheat crops, to put me even with the world. Since then I have sold as good Illinois winter wheat as was ever grown for fifty-six cents a bushel. That was in the 1890s. I was glad to get it; for few would buy advertising space even on credit, and the wheat and other farm products could be sold for cash. That is one great advantage the farmer has and does not recognize, much less appreciate: always he can sell his products for cash. The price may be less than the cost of production, but it brings in the cash. (Of course to continue this means disaster; but more than once it has been to me a mighty comforting episode.) The manufacturer may put below cost the price of his product, yet be unable to sell for cash. I have seen the time when a publisher might have a million dollars of advertising space to sell, but he could not take it to market and come home with the cash in his pocket. More than once during the nineties the crops Farmer Stahl got from three Illinois farms, selling on the basis of eighteen cents a bushel for corn, less for oats, fifty-six cents a bushel for wheat, little more than three cents a pound for fat hogs, and so on, saved Publisher Stahl from very serious financial embarrassment. At other times I have made a big income from my farm investments.

I know farming all right.

MISUNDERSTANDING

THERE are two fundamental errors from which the farmer suffers: The farmer is misunderstood. Farming is misunderstood.

The misunderstanding of the farmer is not confined to other classes. The farmer misunderstands himself. He thinks that he is an executive, financier, skilled laborer, and yet more, all in one. Other people think with him that anyone that because of heredity and far more because of early environment chooses to farm can do so successfully, although to farm successfully requires intelligence, far-sightedness, executive ability, the qualities of the financier, and the training and disposition for downright hard, skilled manual labor. It is conclusive evidence of the possibilities of farming that millions who can not possibly possess these qualities, because other industries have proved that not more than one in a hundred thousand does possess them, can nevertheless, as farmers, make more than a living for themselves and their families.

Other classes have been driven by near starvation to learn. Through bitter opposition, struggle, even violence, all the pains of industrial birth and the errors and prejudices of industrial growth, has come a new and better system than the old in manufacture, transportation, and other lines of human activity. The worker at the lonely forge has been gathered with his fellows into the big plant; the three or four workers at the benches of a little room have been gathered with the thousands like them into the factory covering acres; the teamster with his Conestoga wagon has given place to the train of some score of cars. It has been learned that the few are possessed of those rare qualities that make executive ability and that it is best for all that these few direct the many. It has been found that a few have the capacity for unusual work of discovery or invention of means and machines for doing more with less labor and that it is best to put them where they can work most fruitfully to the benefit of all the others. It has been found that a few have the faculty to foresee the financial needs of enterprises and to provide and handle the funds that will be needed; and they are given that work. All benefit from the employment to the best advantage of the abilities God has given to each. Farming will be driven to that system. The farmer will not lose his farm. Every farmer can have his farm home, in his name on the records of titles, as now. But recognizing that not all men are executives, that not all men are leaders, that not all men are financiers, inventors, or explorers in chemistry, he will put his business more directly under the direction of those exceptionally competent in a special field. One of the biggest jokes in the English language is that the farmer is the most independent of all men. One yet hears it frequently — from politicians wanting an office, mostly. Today no other considerable class of the people of the United States are as dependent as the farmers. They are dependent on the bankers, the packers, the big milling interests, the transportation companies, the manufacturers of farm machinery, and many others. It has been found in the development of government that when the mob surrenders a little of its liberty it has more liberty than it had before, and multiplied safety. When the farmer learns to surrender a little of his liberty of mismanagement, of lame financing, of antiquated methods, and so on, he will find that he is really independent, and that his profits not only exist, but are reasonably large and reasonably sure.

The old system sufficed while the land was yet rich in fertility and increasing population made an advance in the price of land while it was being mined rather than tilled. It will not much longer suffice. The change must be more fundamental than taking money out of one pocket of the farmer to pay a horde of new office holders to put money in the farmer's other pocket until the stimulated, increased production grows to the weight that breaks down the system. The only ones sure to profit in the end would be the many thousands of small-bore, inquisitorial, arbitrary, well-paid office holders.

So much for the farmer's misunderstanding himself; and the conditions of farming that come from it and the remedy therefor.

The farmer is misunderstood by others. One large reason for this I have pointed out in my books on the War of 1812: until the past forty or fifty years those that wrote were generally of the East with, through heredity or by acquisition, the city view; founded on lack of knowledge, but even more on knowing so much that was not true. They wrote of the farmer as they thought he was, not as he was;

finding it easier to write their opinions and prejudices than to get the facts and write the truth. My book, "The Real Farmer," had for its object to set the farmer right before those that read it. It sold remarkably well, but what could one book do?

The book was made the subject of many editorials in various parts of the country. One of these appeared in the Springfield (Mass.) *Union* of October 11, 1908. I will quote from this because it reveals my ideas; and especially because it indicates some of the facts I used to correct the general impression that the farmer thought and voted in a way exactly contrary to the way in which he did think and vote.

> After the Civil War, Mr. Stahl finds, the farmer vote strongly approved the plan to pay the war bonds in full, not in irredeemable greenbacks, but in coin, and to make that coin as good as gold coin. When, in 1872, the Democrats advanced "cheap money" theories to cure the hard times, the farmer vote gave hearty support to Grant, although the Democratic candidate was Horace Greeley, who enjoyed great popularity with farmers throughout the country. As in 1868, every agricultural state gave a Republican majority and the Republican vote in all states was most largely in the country.
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> Mr. Stahl quotes from the declaration of principles of the Knights of Labor, organized in 1869, to show that Populism had its rise in this organization and not among the farmers.
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> "There is the most striking similarity," he says, "in the views expressed by the Greenbackers in the '60s and '70s and the Populist leaders. All are sure that the rich and creditor classes are in a gigantic conspiracy to enlarge the debts of the masses and common people, and therefore to increase the riches of the rich and creditor class by so changing the currency and the standard of value as to make the dollar dearer. Specie payments and the demonetization of silver are to the Populists alike. The free coinage of silver was advocated on the same grounds as the increase of the volume of greenbacks." He quotes from the platform of the National Farmers' Alliance, an organization having its strength in the Northern and Western states, to show that the objects of that organization had nothing in common with Populism, although a body called the National Farmers' Alliance and Co-operative Union, which was confined to the Southern states, eventually embraced Populist theories, though not until it had ceased to be a purely agricultural organization, and this

latter organization united with the Knights of Labor in promulgating a Populist platform. It is by a confusion of facts, he says, that farmers have been held largely responsible for the spread of Populistic ideas.

Reviewing the period following the advent of the People's party into national politics, Mr. Stahl presents figures to show how the vote of the principal farming states was cast. He says: "Iowa is certain that it is the greatest agricultural state in the Union. It is certainly a very great agricultural state and more nearly devoted to agriculture than Illinois, which alone could dispute with it first place among the agricultural states. In neither Iowa nor Illinois did the Populist vote ever cut any figure. These two states, the two greatest agricultural states in the Union, had scarcely any Populist votes, and yet we are told the farmers were Populists!" In 1891, he finds, the People's party's candidate for governor of Iowa received only 2.94 per cent of the whole vote, and in 1892, Weaver, the People's party candidate for President, an Iowa man, received only 4.65 per cent of the vote of the state. And it was from the cities that most of the vote came. In Illinois the same candidate in 1892 received but 2.54 per cent of the vote. In the agricultural states of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Wisconsin, and even Missouri, Populism fared no better than in Iowa and Illinois.

He then turns to the state of Kansas, which first drew national attention to the Populist movement. The People's party vote for governor of Kansas in 1890 was 36.31 per cent of the whole vote, and this vote was largely in the eastern counties, having the towns and cities. In the western counties, which were purely agricultural, the People's party vote was only 10.91 per cent of the entire vote. "Yet," Mr. Stahl observes, "thousands of really intelligent people yet think that practically every farmer in those new agricultural, mortgage-ridden Western counties was a Populist." In 1892, when the People's party candidates had 50.51 per cent of the vote of the state, being indorsed by the Democrats, the Populist vote for the most part was not in the agricultural districts, but in the towns and cities. Statistics for the entire period covering the rise and fall of the People's party and other organizations having kindred doctrines are presented in detail by Mr. Stahl, and they will make interesting reading for those desirous of forming an opinion as to the true attitude of the farmers on Populist issues and the candidates that represent them.

The farmer and farming will not be given fair conditions until a body of fair-minded women and men who are free from prejudices and pet plans and schemes, and who will leave their opinions behind when they take up the work, and who are broadly intelligent and thoughtful representatives of all our principal fields of activity, are set to work to make a study of farming and with authority sufficient to get at the bottom of things.

I am sure they will find that legislation is needed to give the farmer a fair field and no favors. In what I say about the tariff commission I indicate a spot that will suggest legislation.

But just legislation can not do as much as can be done by better practices. Let me give two homely examples, that I am well aware will not be popular and will forever destroy my chances of being elected President of the United States or getting a job created by something like the McNary-Haugen equalization fee monstrosity.

VEGETABLES AND RODENTS

FIRST, every farmer can and should have a real vegetable garden. During the warm months of 1926 and 1927 my wife and I drove more than twenty thousand miles in the very best agricultural states of the Union. We played a game: alternately guessing whether or not the next farm would have a real garden. We found that wherever the fences were good, the fence rows clean, the buildings well painted and in good repair, and there were sleek animals in the fields, there was a neat dooryard with shrubs and flowers and a good vegetable garden. And vice versa. If we stopped to talk with the people of the farm described we got no tale of woe. If we stopped to talk with the no garden, no paint, no neat fence row people, we found that there was no money in farming, the bankers and transportation companies and manufacturers were thieves and robbers, and city people made all the money because they got all the laws they wanted.

The average farmer has no idea what a real garden is. He thinks it is a plat six by eight and a tired woman with a hoe, and that is what he has. It is a half acre to an acre and a man and horse and wheel hoe. I know exactly what I am talking about. I have had a real garden year after year, although I lived in Chicago. It was twenty-five miles from where I lived. I could drive to it in an hour. The rows of the garden were twenty rods long. Suppose Old Tom, the horse, and the wheel cultivator and the man behind it, did cover up some of the peas or beans: half a dozen rows made more than the Stahl family, and a dozen of their friends at times, could use.

Often I have heard my father say he would as soon cultivate an acre of raspberries as an acre of corn. One hundred raspberry and an equal number of blackberry bushes properly handled, and that requires little labor, will give the average farmer family a long season of better fruit than the city man can buy, for it will be fresh. Of an ordinary season, with good culture, half that number will suffice. Yet not one farmer in fifty has a berry patch worthy of the name. It is no great job to keep an orchard in good condition. A barrel spraying outfit can serve a dozen farms and more, as I have demonstrated. But the large majority of farms have no orchard at all or one so neglected that it can not produce good fruit and produces little of any kind.

I know what I am writing about when I make these assertions about gardens and berry patches and orchards. I give no weight to the results of " surveys " by sweet things and sheiks and aged men given a job through the influence of a public official, that may be to the contrary — I have seen such " surveys " made by those who would not know beans from peas when growing, but they never got far enough from the hotel to see such things on a farm.

Too many farmers have a pile of tin cans where should be a bed of asparagus. Too many are making a meal of Swift's or Armour's meats and baker's bread when they should have a meal of fresh vegetables and fruits grown within a hundred yards of where they are eating.

Unfortunately gardening can not be done with a big machine that feeds on gasoline. The farmers of the United States are each year paying tens of millions of dollars of hard cash for gasoline for a machine to do the work that belongs to horses that would consume 150,000,000 bushels of corn each year — something that would mightily reduce the surplus of corn; and a good part of the money spent for gasoline could be spent for running water and inside toilet and bathroom in the farm house; or electricity for light, cooking, ironing, and dairy work, for reducing the surplus would enhance the price of that sold.

The other homely suggestion has to do with destructive rodents. Authorities whose figures can not be intelligently questioned say that rodents occasion a loss each year on the farms of the United States of five hundred million dollars. Of these rodents the rat is the most offensive and doubtless the most destructive. More than that, this animal is a carrier of disease and in other ways is a menace to health. Eighty percent of the loss from rodents could be saved by means and methods that would require less energy, time, and money than the farmer puts into organizations that are of no help to him. The national department of agriculture and many of the state experiment stations will send the farmer, free, full instructions for the riddance of farms of the destructive rodents. The most effective means are chemicals that are not expensive and can be used with safety if used according to directions.

MARKETING THE SURPLUS OF CORN

THE SURPLUS of corn, about which we hear so much, can be reduced by increasing its consumption abroad by educating foreigners to its value as food and by teaching them how to prepare it to make it most palatable. So prepared, it is indeed a toothsome dainty. Thirty years ago I had in the *North American Review* an article on our corn surplus. In that article I said:

The following comparative table showing the food value of corn and other cereals was prepared by the chemical division of the Department of Agriculture, and may be accepted as correct:

	Hulled Oats	*Wheat*	*Rye*	*Barley*	*Corn*
Water	6.93	10.27	8.67	6.53	10.04
Ash	2.15	1.84	2.09	2.89	1.52
Oil or fat	8.14	2.16	1.94	2.68	5.20
Digestible carbohydrates ..	67.09	71.98	74.52	72.77	70.69
Crude carbohydrates	1.38	1.80	1.45	3.80	2.09
Albuminoids	14.21	11.95	11.32	11.33	10.46

It will be seen that as a food for producing energy or heat or fat, corn stands in the very front rank; but, unfortunately, very few people of Europe know this, and yet fewer know how to prepare corn for food for human consumption. Clearly the thing for us to do is to acquaint the peoples of breadstuffs-importing countries with the merits of corn and the proper ways of preparing it for consumption. Mr. Rusk, when Secretary of Agriculture, perceived this, and in 1890 he sent a special agent of his department to Europe, to see what should be done and could be done to increase the European consumption of corn. The work of the agent received, generally, the hearty support of our diplomatic and consular representatives. A fair expression of their opinions of the corn propaganda is found in the report to the State Department made by our consul-general at Vienna:

"There is room in Europe for the consumption of several hundred million bushels of American corn per year, much of it as food for human beings that do not now get enough to eat. All the known preparations of corn should be prepared, put on show and distributed as samples."

"Uncle Jerry" Rusk was a capable, far-seeing Secretary of Agriculture. He was fully alive to the importance of increasing the foreign markets for our corn. Our views had been in accord for years. The overproduction of corn was a live topic during all of the nineties and before. I had been discussing it for years. I have an article I wrote in 1886 about increasing our export of corn, and also of our meats produced by feeding corn. Then, and for years, instead of anything being done to enlarge our foreign markets for corn and meats and other farm products, those markets were more and more sacrificed. Farmers did not, and after years of effort I concluded that they could not be awakened to appreciate the importance of foreign markets for their products. Manufacturers saw clearly the importance of foreign markets for their products and made unstinted use of our consular service and of expositions and other agencies to increase abroad the demand for their goods. Nothing was done to protect, much less to enlarge, the foreign markets for farm products; and without any protest or representation from our government, foreign governments put on the importation of our meats, for an example, prohibitive restrictions based on what they acknowledged was a lying accusation so false that it could not be even excused. I have not regretted the articles I wrote and the talks I made about this, although the only result I could perceive and it was of gratifying proportions, was further to educate the manufacturers and increase their efforts, businesslike and commendable, to enlarge their foreign markets. Mentioning this to Secretary Rusk, he said that so far as he could see his efforts had produced the same effect and no more of a direct nature; but he consoled himself by thinking that as our manufacturers increased the foreign demand for their goods our manufactures would grow and that meant a better home market for our farm products. Of course this student of Adam Smith and of the protectionist text-books had thought of that, but he asked Secretary Rusk if he thought that was a satisfactory result; and he replied that he had long since given up expectation of an adequate result of any effort for the public good, but that was no reason why an honest man that thought well of his country should do any less than his best. I said no more, for I saw that he would have the best of that argument.

I went abroad in 1899. I wished to confer, and did confer, with many of the most thoughtful and influential agriculturists of Great Britain and the Continent. I conferred with a great many about the " Corn Kitchen " at the International Exposition in Paris the next year; this Kitchen being designed to show those that came to the exposition that corn was a palatable and nutritious food for human beings and how best to prepare it. Almost everyone had commended the Corn Kitchen (first proposed by Miss Sickles and promoted by the Farmers' National Congress) if they had been made well acquainted with its proposed nature and objects; and I did not find it difficult to get the proper interest and action of those in France and elsewhere whose action seemed necessary. Fortunately in 1899 I spoke French almost as fluently as English, and my pronounced accent apparently gained me all the more consideration. To many I had to explain fully what it was proposed to do and how we hoped to do it and what we hoped to accomplish. And I found that was all that was necessary.

Congress made a liberal appropriation for the Corn Kitchen; and then occurred that which some of us had feared: the Kitchen was made first of all the means of a well-financed junket to the exposition by certain politicians and office holders. Miss Sickles, by all means entitled to manage it and by long odds the most competent to do so, was left out entirely. Of course the Kitchen was a failure. It did not increase by a bushel the foreign consumption of our corn. A great opportunity was thrown away. But because of that it is none the less true that the right effort, coupled with better adjusted import duties that now affect certain foreign nations rather severely, would greatly increase the foreign consumption of our corn; an increase that as long as the present production was not greatly increased would care for the surplus. I think such action would be better than that which, by artificially putting up the price, tends to increase the very evil it is hoped to lessen; for an artificially hoisted price will increase production. By artificial action on price I mean that outside of the operation of the law of supply and demand.

I can not better close this discussion of the distributive side of farming than by giving the following, from the active brain of Ed. J. Condon, a profound student of farm problems and a wise worker to improve the condition of farmers:

In spite of anything to the contrary that may be said, it will take a world of logic to convince me that a real agricultural relief can ever spring from any source but a more efficient method of distribution of farm products.

After all, there are only two great divisions to this business of agriculture — production and distribution. Of production we have had enough, if not too much. Improvement from this point on will be along the lines of a more effective distribution.

Let us draw some examples from an efficient industry. Take the filling station. A great corporation sends its own geologists into a producing area. They drill their own wells, run their own pipe lines to their own refineries, supply their own stations from their own trucks, and their employees fill our tanks. Of course, they make a profit, and perhaps a healthy one; but they have placed a necessary commodity within the easy reach of every man who drives a "flivver" and they are entitled to that profit. Take the large rubber manufacturers, or the larger chain retailers, or the steel companies. Their profit comes from cutting unnecessary profits all the way down the line. And the result is a better product to the consumer at a lower price.

That is the important fact to bear in mind — a better price to the consumer. Only about one-fourth of the population of this country — the producing fourth — is directly interested in farm relief. The vast remainder is concerned only with the purchasing of better foodstuffs at a lower price. That is only natural. As long as any movement which will tend to increase the price of a given commodity to the producer, will follow automatically down the line to the consumer, this vast majority will be unsympathetic toward farm relief. In fact, they may be openly antagonistic. And well they might. They are paying enough now, and, in many cases, more than enough. The trouble lies in the distribution — the tremendous spread between the producer and the consumer, the unnecessary profits taken at so many points along the road to market. When that gap is shortened, and it can be shortened, the result will be a better price to the farmer and a more attractive price to the consumer. The thing to do now is to turn our attention from production and make the same rapid strides in distributing the commodities produced. When the American nation as a whole has a full appreciation of the ends to be achieved, it will result in that achievement. Consumption will be increased and the value of the full crop, instead of the surplus, will establish the price.

Much could be said about this phase of agricultural marketing — much will be said and done. When the full strength of distribution can be depended upon to supply the motive power for the present vehicle of agriculture, then will the American farmer be on the permanent high road to better conditions; and, in the opinion of the writer, not until then.

Laws for the benefit of our farmers and farming will be more effective if they stimulate a *variety* of agricultural productions, leading to a greater home production of the foods we import, rather than if they stimulate the production of those crops of which we already produce too much. We send abroad hundreds of millions of dollars annually for imported food products. If the proud American farmer was not afraid of getting close to mother earth in the field and would consider farming that could not be done with a machine and if a little proper legislation were enacted, we would produce here at a good profit to the producer much of the foodstuffs we import.

Another thing, the farmer can practise some very profitable conservation right on his own farm by stopping the waste of manure — oh, yes, I know that is old stuff, but it is true — and by caring for his farm implements and machines. This includes shelter, careful lubrication where lubrication is needed, grease to prevent rust, and prompt investigation and remedy when "something seems to be wrong." The properly cared for machine or implement will not only last much longer, but always it will do better and easier work.

DEMANDING, AND DEMANDING TOO MUCH, AND WITH TOO MUCH NOISE

ONE other thing the farmer can do while waiting on Congress to create riches by law and that is to be more critical of the organizations bearing his name and having his support. If there had been no so-called farmers' organizations the farmers would have had laws more favorable to agriculture enacted by Congress during the past fifty years. That is not saying that some farmers' organizations have not done a great deal of good. The Grange, for example, has helped the farmer mightily to find himself and in a score of other ways. To a less extent this is true of the Farmer's Union. There are now farmers' organizations like the Farm Bureau, that are teaching the farmer better business methods; especially to study the distributive half of farming and adopt better marketing methods, both selling and buying. The farmers of Illinois, for example, are co-operatively selling $150,000,000 of their products a year. These organizations that put politics and farmer political parties and chimerical legislative remedies in the background and stress better business methods, especially more comprehensive, far-seeing, effective plans of buying and selling, should have the hearty support of the farmer. But eternal vigilance will be the price of keeping them out of the control of politicians and other selfish, scheming palaverers. Of all men, the farmer is, for some reason, the most industriously beguiled by the unworthy. He should take to heart the wise words of old Aristophanes: "Good folks are scarce; and so it is with us." And will be to the end of time.

The farmer is always "the complaining witness." Recently I have spent many days going through the *Congressional Record* of a period of about fifty years and it shows that every year the farmer was complaining; he was never prosperous; he was always getting less than his share; conditions were driving his children to the city; his condition spelt disaster to the country. Everybody in Congress — and nearly all outside of Congress — are his friends; yet he gets mighty little; mighty little indeed in comparison with the fuss and persistent noise made by him and for him. The manufacturers and "transportation interests" and "moneyed combines" and "big business" and "the bankers" and "the creditor class" and "Wall Street" and "the Labor Unions" make very little noise, but they fare much better. The results obtained are in inverse ratio to the noise. "Wall Street" and "the Big Moneyed Interests" and "the Railroads" and "the Protected Manufacturers" are very quiet; apparently they have except at certain times not a friend in Congress or in the administration, but they get what they want. Nearly half a century ago I saw plainly that in getting legislation brains counted for more than noise. Also, that those that succeeded before Congress went after one thing at a time, a definite thing, a very well-considered and argued thing; and that certain people — false friends, lobbyists for other classes — encouraged the farmer, and for a time the laboring man also, to go vigorously after several things, none very definite, none convincingly argued, but noisily and numerously advocated, thus making it plain that the farmer did not know exactly what he wanted, was hazy as to what it might accomplish if he got it, and was making a very great amount of noise and was stirring up a great cloud of dust, which obscured and even nicely hid the little dust made by "the interests" and drowned the little noise made by them while they pushed through Congress the measures they desired.

"The interests" that the farmer always so vigorously belabored had no numerous, prominent organizations; in fact, it was hard to discover that they had any organization. They had certainly a working agreement. They had learned that in union there is strength; and they had also learned that for united action there must be only a few. The farmer thought that the more organizations he had and the more people in them, the more he would accomplish. It was a plain fact, but he never grasped it, that while his organizations looked formidable, they were his weakness; for they were jealous of one another; they did not wish the same things; they fought one another and every one fought and antagonized some part of Congress — almost always the large majority — and while they were fighting among themselves and with everybody and everything that did not see things as they did, the other fellows of Wall Street and Pittsburgh and elsewhere, having learned that a fight and antagonism were to be avoided, quietly and adroitly asked — and got.

TOO MUCH LAND AND DEBT

THE farmer has too much land with debt and insufficient working capital. As a result he can not stock his land well with pure-bred animals best adapted to his farming intelligently determined and practised; animals that will bring him, if properly handled, a better price for his grain than if it is sold as grain, that will consume the roughage produced on the farm, and that will be aids in maintaining the fertility of the land. I repeat that the farmer has too much land; and also he has too little working capital. Selling for cash, he should buy for cash more, much more, than he does. He would get lower prices. He would get better quality.

The farmer has 160 acres of farm when he should have only 80; he has 320 acres when he should have only 120; and so on. He has a mortgage which hampers and burdens and which he would not have if he did not have too much land. Only the very exceptional farmer can nowadays make a profit by borrowing money with which to buy more land; nor can it be reasonably hoped that it will be easier to make this profit at any time in the future, if the farmer continues to attempt to be executive, financier, scientist, and sales manager all in one. To make a profit it is necessary to do more than make an income equal to the interest on the money borrowed. Taxes on the land must be paid; additional farm machinery must be provided, and a charge is properly made for the use of the money put into this machinery and for its depreciation; fences, and probably some buildings, must be maintained, and the national government recognizes that depreciation is properly included each year. If the income is in part due to mining the soil as well as farming, which has been the case generally in the productive agricultural area; if more is taken from the soil than is given back to such extent that there is a decrease of productivity, that, also, must be taken from the income to arrive at the profit. The farmer and his family are entitled to compensation for the labor they put on the land. During the past thirty-seven years I have gone very thoroughly into the real income from land, in that time going with open eyes and questioning tongue into every state of the Union except three, and repeatedly into the so-called "rich agricultural states"; and I repeat that only the exceptional farmer, not more than one in fifty, can now make or can expect to make in the future, a real gain by borrowing money to buy more land; and that more than eighty percent of those in debt for land would better sell enough to pay off their indebtedness.

The farmer with keen eyes and ready money will find plenty of real bargains.

AND LASTLY

Last, but not least, the farmer, like everyone else, does not think and learn as he might. One may well be free to mention that, for all are guilty. Recently I had a long talk with the agricultural agent of one of the best farming counties of Wisconsin. He told me that about one fourth of the farmers of the county were making more than a good living; that a few were doing well indeed; and that the farmers made money as they planned wisely and used up-to-date means and methods. He told me of two old farmers, both called "Uncle," who had each bought 320 acres of land nearly forty years ago; the two farms lying side by side and being remarkably equal as to quality. The one farmer has the "finest dairy and stock farm in the county and he is making good money every year"; but his neighbor, living less than a half mile from him, having as much and as good land, "has had to put a mortgage on his farm; he farms just about as he did twenty or thirty years ago." Such examples are in every agricultural county of the United States. For years, until very recently, my work brought to my desk a flood of letters from farmers about their problems of all sorts, of course mostly relating to farming. Hogs were bringing a fancy price and cattle were comparatively low, for example. Stacks of letters asked about future prices. I would reply that I never predicted the market; but it was, in my humble opinion, a safe guess that the high price of hogs would lead to overproduction and lower prices; and the price of cattle would lead to conditions that would bring higher prices; that I would not buy sows to breed; in fact, would probably market sows and carry few hogs; and would buy young cattle. Without exception what I had anticipated came to pass. In the case I have mentioned, in due time the thoughtful, reasoning farmers had cattle to sell; the mass of farmers had hogs to sell. I heard a thoughtful, wise, highly successful farmer say years ago that when seed potatoes were a dollar a bushel he planted none; when they were ten cents a bushel he planted by the acre. He knew that when the seed was high many would plant big acreage and there would be overproduction and low prices; and that when the seed was low in price few would plant and prices would be high within a year. What he said made a deep impression on me.

I know that humanity has come to accept it as a matter of course, as something that can not be changed, that the few must rule and the few will be rich, while the many must serve and the many will be poor. I do not accept that as a finality. I have never read any other joke quite so ponderous and amusing as the solemn declaration that all men are created equal. The evidence is that this assertion should be credited to James Otis, who was afflicted with periodical insanity. John Adams gave him the credit for the pronouncements in the Declaration of Independence "composed . . . in one of his lucid intervals"; but undoubtedly the assertion that all men are created equal was composed at some other time. Some have vainly tried to make it appear otherwise by loading the assertion with as many qualifications and exceptions, protocols and reservations, as the august Senate of the United States is prone to hang on to a treaty; but if the assertion is made other than ridiculous nothing of substance is left of it. I go to this length to make my position clear, for immediately I will assert, and do assert, that if we of the United States are at all worthy of our heritage we will see to it that the differences in condition of different classes and different individuals is made less and less and less, until they are of little degree and consequence compared with what they are now. In fact, I am sure that there is a compelling tendency, an irresistible force, a deep, all-powerful movement, among men everywhere, but perhaps most marked in the United States, to bring the top and the bottom nearer together, not so much by lowering the top, if at all, as by elevating the bottom; the result being that men will be born much more nearly equal and will continue much more nearly equal, the approach to equality being closer each year. This will affect farmers as well as other classes. A greater wisdom than the farmer now has will put the mass under the leadership of the few; not to exploit the mass for the benefit of the few, because the mass will grow in independence and freedom, but that the many may have of life more abundantly; and the farmers and others will go joyously up the slopes, some singing, to the fairer fields of activity, where the hours of labor are fewer and the tasks are easier while the rewards are greater, until it shall come to pass that no child hungers, no backs be bent by cruel toil, but all people shall dwell secure in peace and plenty.

CHAPTER XIX

PHILOSOPHY IN ST. LOUIS

DR. NEWMAN SMYTH

NEWMAN SMYTH was pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Quincy, Illinois, from 1876 to 1882. He was pastor of the First Congregational Church of New Haven, Connecticut, from 1883 until 1907, and pastor emeritus from 1908 until his death, January 6, 1925. He was the author of fifteen books, every one of them deeply thoughtful and beautifully written. His second book appeared in 1879, the year in which I entered the high school in Quincy. It was entitled "Old Faiths in New Light." I read and reread it. It was considered very radical by most, heretical by some, and even worse by a few. It was severely criticized, as were some of his latest writings. Among my treasures today is an old copy of this book, bearing the imprint of Charles Scribner's Sons, 1879. On many of its pages are marginal notes, in pencil, not made by me — it is a book I lent around. Pasted to the fly-leaf is a note from Dr. Smyth, closing with "thanks for your kind recollection of hearing me forty years ago." The note is dated March 19, 1923.

Regularly I went to church when I was in Quincy and most often I went to the First Presbyterian. I was never in a Presbyterian church until I went to this one. I liked the music in this church. It had an excellent quartet and organ. But the greater attraction was the sermons of Dr. Smyth. His quiet reading of his written sermons was very different from the loud, at times noisy and occasionally impassioned, delivery of a gesticulating preacher — the only sort I had previously heard. Dr. Smyth's sermons were thought-provoking. They put questions in my mind. They aroused and nourished the brain.

I am sure that I was not attracted to this church because the building was the newest and handsomest and most costly of the church buildings of Quincy at that time. Some years before the church society had erected a new church building. The night before it was to be dedicated it was destroyed by fire. This was a severe blow to the church society. But at once the heroic society, led by their resourceful, courageous pastor, made plans to rebuild. Dr. Smyth preached a series of notable sermons. These he delivered elsewhere as paid lectures and in this way he raised a considerable contribution to the building fund. These sermons, printed in book form, were "Old Faiths in New Light."

The sermons and the books of Dr. Smyth had a real influence on my thoughts. In my earlier days I had read all of Bob Ingersoll's published lectures, and much of the writings of other atheists — I read the periodical, *The Truthseeker,* regularly. I think that when I began going to Dr. Smyth's church the term that would have most accurately fitted me was "agnostic." I think that every young person inclined to be thoughtful — thought is very active; it is the opposite of contemplation or dreaming in daytime, often mistaken for thought — passes through the Valley of Doubt.

ST. LOUIS

As ALREADY stated, in 1883 I took up my residence in St. Louis.

My going to St. Louis was epochal in my life.

There rapidly developed such a change in my thoughts, my conceptions, my avocations, my inlook, and my outlook, my ambitions and my visions, that I believe I might well write, not that there began a new chapter in my life, but that there began for me a new life; something even more fundamental and vital than when, at five years of age, I was moved from one home to another; or, ten years later, I owned the priceless treasure of Quackenbos' *First Lessons in English Composition* and my first article appeared in a farm paper —

> Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
>   When a new planet swims into his ken;
> Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
>   He stared at the Pacific, and all his men
> Looked at each other with wild surmise,
>   Silent, upon a peak in Darien —

for that which followed my going to St. Louis was a regenesis.

In the early eighties St. Louis was a more important city, comparatively, than it is now. In 1860 its population was 160,773; that of Chicago, 112,172. In 1870 the population of St. Louis was 310,864; of Chicago, 298,977. By 1880 Chicago had passed St. Louis in population, but St. Louis could claim with good reason that it was the wealthier city. It was commonly said that while St. Louis owned itself, Chicago was owned by Boston and New York. What counted for much more, St. Louis had long had an appreciation of learning, literature, and art. In the early eighties it had a wide and well-established fame for its quiet wealth, its urbane life, its learned, cultured citizens, its appreciation and possession of books, music, paintings, sculptures, its consciousness of the amenities of life and its correct observance of social customs — correct because inbred rather than acquired, the heritage of generations of education, loving familiarity with fine arts, and appreciation and observance of all that is finest in the social side of life. The dominating influences of St. Louis were yet French. That meant a very great deal. The University of Chicago was compelled to close its doors in 1886, when Chicago had a population of more than three quarters of a million and boasted of nearly four thousand saloons. But Washington University in St. Louis, founded in 1853, flourished, and it is significant that the School and Museum of Fine Arts became a part of it in

1879. Chicago sprawled out on the marsh, sinking in the mud, its atmosphere permeated with the reek of its stockyards and river; raw, uncultured, and indifferent to social usages and the amenities of life, its so-called society people generally vulgar in their display, their language, their manners — as late as the World's Fair this was notorious. The spokesmen of the city actually boasted of its contempt of Art and ignorance of Literature. The Arts were repelled by Chicago; they found a welcome in St. Louis. True, in Chicago there were voices crying in the wilderness, but they were unheeded.

The soil and the atmosphere were favorable in St. Louis to the growth of a distinctive group of authors and a group of students and much more than students of speculative philosophy, and this growth began to flower in the seventies. Llewellyn Jones, the literary critic, wrote in a notice of my lectures on authors: " He goes back to the days of the literary movement in St. Louis, which was also a philosophical movement, having an even greater effect on the thought of the day than did the famous Concord School of Philosophy." By the early eighties it was actually said that St. Louis would soon be the literary capital of the United States. But St. Louis knew that at the most it was the literary center of that Midland territory which was producing some of the best literature of the country. Never before had literature of such quality and quantity been produced west of New York. Of those who brought to St. Louis its literary and philosophic fame of the seventies and eighties, three stand out as leaders: Mary N. Murfree, Alexander N. DeMenil, and William T. Harris.

SPECULATIVE PHILOSOPHY

It will be well to remember that after the French the most important element of the population of St. Louis in the sixties, seventies, and eighties was the German. The French had come to St. Louis at a time when they were sure to bring independent thinking with them; and this had persisted in their descendants. The Germans were of that class that had found, since 1848, the climate of the United States much more healthful than that of the German Confederation. These German immigrants were independent thinkers; they were mentally in revolt; many of them found a home in St. Louis. They had an influence on the thought and culture of the city out of proportion to their numbers. Of course they were interested in the German philosophy and they listened receptively when Harris talked of Hegel and his philosophy.

In St. Louis there was a slight sprinkling of Yankees who had read Emerson and other New England thinkers. They, too, were receptive.

The wealthy Southerners, of the slave-owning class, were not at all interested in philosophy, although they were educated (in a narrow way) and were not ignorant of art or literature.

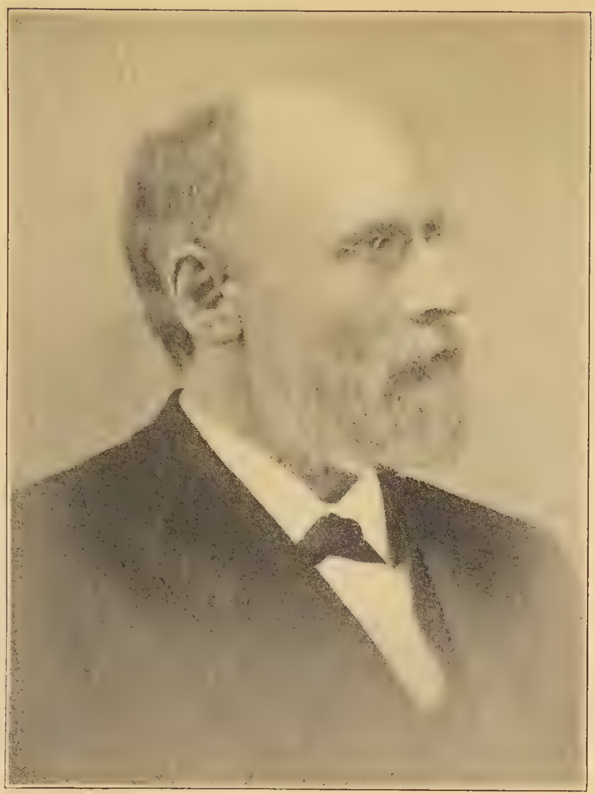
All in all, St. Louis was the city of all our cities, those of New England not excepted, to pay some heed to the motto of the *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* — the words of Novalis: " Philosophy can bake no bread; but she can procure for us God, Freedom, and Immortality."

Of the many literary people of St. Louis — authors, near authors, budding authors, writers, newspaper men — William T. Harris was the leader of the philosophic section.

However, while he was from the close of the war between the states the leader of the philosophic group and was always its clear-voiced spokesman, he was not the first of the group. That honor must go to the somewhat unkempt Brockmeyer, German born and one hundred percent German. He came to the United States when he was sixteen. The next recorded fact of his life is his expulsion from a western college because he actually thought, and his thought was independent, revolutionary, and therefore intolerable at that time. He went to the East and remained long enough to absorb some of the unsafe New England ideas; and to admire Thoreau to such purpose that for several years he dwelt in Kentucky, in a log cabin built by his own hands, his only companion a deeply speculative philosophic dog, and his only means of subsistence a rifle. The results of these years of solitude were fantastic fancies and expressions and the wise conclusion that it is not well for man, though a philosopher, long to dwell alone. Thus it happened that in 1858, in St. Louis, he, then employed in a foundry, met the man whom he would influence and who would even more influence him — William T. Harris. They met at a gathering to discuss spiritualism and hypnotism, this last then more often called mesmerism.

Brockmeyer is not always mentioned as one of the speculative philosophers. What little he wrote was not worth preservation and long since met its deserved fate. He was slovenly in thought and speech. He looked his part. He was overenthusiastic and emphatic. He had many real ideas, of greater or less — generally less — sanity and value, and he had a yet greater gush of words. He was as artful as he was spontaneous in his use of metaphor and imagery. He admitted that he was a philosopher. He was sure that the one worthy to be called Leader was Hegel, some of whose ideas had come to him independently during his log-cabin years, before he had read Hegel. His one outstanding object in life was to translate the *Wissenschaft der Logik,* and this he pursued in the way of his undertakings: he never came near its accomplishment. But the labor of the foundry and the other labor in which he engaged to make an honest living, were not easy; and in time politics claimed much of his attention. I think his most important contribution to the philosophic movement was to hasten the journey of William T. Harris from Kant to Hegel.

Harris had been a student of phrenology while he was at Yale. Phrenology was a very respectable study in some quarters for fifty years. When I was a boy all the Stahl family older than I, except my father, were interested in phrenology. We took the *Phrenological Journal* for years



WILLIAM T. HARRIS

MARY NOAILLES MURFREE
(Charles Egbert Craddock)

and had several illustrated books on phrenology — translations of some of the writings of Gall and Spurzheim and the books of Combe, the Fowler brothers, Dr. Caldwell, and others. I read the magazine and the books. I yet think there is much more in phrenology than the mob has the least idea of; the present public opinion of it being due to the jibes of ignorant wits who had not the least idea what it was all about or the ability to know. Harris and Brockmeyer, meeting in St. Louis before the war between the states, discussed philosophy and gathered together a little group interested in it; but before any results were achieved the group was broken up by the war. Harris was a teacher in the public schools of St. Louis from 1857 to 1867 and superintendent of the schools of that city from 1867 to 1880. The group was revived almost immediately after the war. Harris established his School of Speculative Philosophy in 1866, and his *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* in 1867.

Harris had a much broader view than Brockmeyer. He made it plain from the beginning that the object of gathering together those who wished to delve into speculative philosophy and of his *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* was much more than the study of German philosophy; it was to make students of speculative philosophy who would *add to the German philosophy;* would carry the banner farther. *The object was, above all, to develop thinkers.*

After receiving many honors, in 1880 Harris resigned his position in St. Louis because of ill health and went to Concord, where he assisted in founding the Concord School of Philosophy. There he lectured on metaphysical themes. While Alcott was the nominal head of the School, Harris was the directing genius. In 1877 he was appointed professor of the philosophy of education in Washington University, St. Louis. He was United States Commissioner of Education from 1899 until his death in 1909.

MESMERISM AND PHILOSOPHY

WHEN I went to St. Louis in 1883 the influence of the Philosophical Society was quite apparent. St. Louis was proud that for years it had been the acknowleged center of philosophic thought and study of the United States. Of course only a small percentage of the citizens had a real knowledge of or interest in speculative philosophy; but such was the character of my first acquaintances in St. Louis that fully one half of them listened to lectures on it, read about it, talked about it. Some were students; some little more than observers; and some regarded it as a means of amusement. The sermons and books of Newman Smyth had so influenced me that inevitably I was attracted to the element interested in Dr. Harris and what he had taught. I think the reader will understand that the son of the woman who when young had gone against the opinions of the time and had studied natural philosophy, as it was called, and chemistry and astronomy and "moral philosophy"—her Upham's "Moral Philosophy" is one of my priceless treasures now: who had purchased and read the books of Channing—that this son would find himself at home among the followers of William Torrey Harris. Already I had read Mill and Spencer and Comte and had also gone back to Aristotle and Socrates (who made the greatest appeal of all); I had also read a great deal of the German philosophy that could be found in English translations; and I had dipped into Persian and East Indian philosophy: the language of those who had studied with Harris was not altogether strange or unintelligible to me.

I remember with amusement that my first intimate acquaintances in St. Louis were, however, those gathered together to investigate hypnotism. The majority of the Hypnotism Club, or, as its members most often termed it, the Idiotism Club, were interested in speculative philosophy. I heard W. T. Harris lecture, I read his *Journal,* and I had the honor of meeting him. He came to St. Louis several times after taking up his residence elsewhere. He was affable, unassuming, and in appearance and manner was as far removed as he well could be from what I supposed a philosopher must be. This has been my experience always: Philosophers have not been grave and gloomy, but the opposite; statesmen have not been heavy and ponderous and severe, but have eaten doughnuts and pie in a very inconsequential way, talked about the weather, and joked about ties and socks; and authors have been almost exactly as small town business men should be. (Who, seeing Sinclair Lewis, not knowing who he is, would guess him other than the proprietor of the bakery or grocery store in the village? And Sherwood Anderson, small town newspaper proprietor at this writing — I doubt if even Satan knows what he will be a year hence — fits perfectly into his surroundings.) Of course a philosopher should speak slowly, should speak little, should speak only in riddles about things that only he can understand. Dr. Harris, when set going among those he liked, was an entertaining talker and apparently could talk well about any subject from the worst joke in Opie Read's *Arkansaw Traveler* to Dante's "Divina Commedia," from the weather the day before the last rain to the logic of Hegel (which was the subject of one of his books). Perhaps his interest in and sympathy with me was in part due to his having been a teacher. I think he knew well enough that some who professed to be much interested in him and philosophy regarded him as a crank who might suddenly become dangerous, and all speculative philosophy as nonsense; for he had a characteristic a philosopher should never have, i. e., shrewdness. He amused them; and more did they amuse him.

To use a slang phrase, Harris did more than even Mary N. Murfree to "put St. Louis on the map." His *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* was the first periodical devoted to that subject in the United States. It attracted much attention in this country and Europe, and all the more because it was edited and published in St. Louis, of which ninety-eight percent of the Easterners, yet exceedingly narrow and insular, had an ignorant notion. Dr. Harris' expositions of the Hegelian philosophy were both masterly and interesting. He mixed with it a liberal seasoning of the freedom of the will. He must have read Jonathan Edwards at a very tender age. He had literary style, and of such nature that it attracted. That is one reason why for a time St. Louis was the center of the Hegelian philosophy. He was imbued with the German idealism; he was one with the German scholarship. His outstanding purpose, it seemed to me, was to dissipate that agnosticism which at that time I thought was the greatest force for progress working in mankind. To me Spencer's assertion that we can not conceive the infinite was of the nature of an axiom. If we can conceive anything it can no longer be infinite. Harris consistently opposed Spencer. Nor could I follow him to the full length of his way in social philosophy. I thought he went a little too far when he taught that the state is " a social unit in which the individual exists not for himself, but for the use of the unit." However, he said that " social order is not to be secured by external authority, but by free choice."

The most important result of the thought and work of Harris and his co-workers was as he wished: the uncovering and development of our own, of American, philosophers. Among these may well be mentioned Pierce, justly styled " the father of Pragmatism "; and his disciple, John Dewey, who had my interest before he went to Chicago in 1893.

If Harris had done nothing more than to exert the influence he did on John Dewey, his life would have been successful and he would be entitled to gratitude and fame. In 1880 Dewey submitted to him a paper on Spinoza that he had just written, asking Harris, " Should I go on in Philosophy? " The answer was a positive — and decisive — Yes. As a result John Dewey studied philosophy at Johns Hopkins for three years, beginning in 1881. It was fortunate, I think, that he was under Marsh, who, through T. H. Green, was a student, and more, of the German metaphysical idealism. That metaphysical idealism influenced Dewey greatly for years; perhaps has influenced him somewhat to this day. He was one of that notable faculty that William Rainey Harper assembled in 1892 and 1893, in the last named year coming to the University of Chicago from Michigan to take the place of Professor of Philosophy. In 1902 he became the Director of the School of Education of the University, and from that year until 1904 (when he went to Columbia University) he directed the first experimental school, which became the model of all the schools throughout the United States that combine education and life, making of education a life full of meaning and abounding in constantly awakened imaginative thought. I owe Professor Dewey, as do so many, a great debt: my children had all their schooling up to college in the School of Education of the University of Chicago. I am sure that no one will intelligently dispute that the Vermont farm boy, who looked to William T. Harris as mentor as well as teacher, and who was influenced for a time by the German philosophy, has become one of the half dozen most original, bold and sane speculative philosophers of the last one hundred years, and today is the most profound and influential philosopher of this country, if not of the world. Certainly of those living today, no other philosopher has equalled him in boldness and originality, or in the application of his thinking and conclusions to education, human conduct, and government.

The more I have considered it the more marvelous it has appeared to me that in a bustling city of "the West," located almost where the West began as one traveled east at the time, there came into being the leading idealistic movement; that in that city should be the beginning of the study of Hegel — not the weak solution of German philosophy which had been taught at Yale, Harvard, and Princeton; that in that city should be made familiar the undiluted philosophy of Kant and his disciples — the first Kant class in America was in St. Louis; that in that city should be made the first American translations of Schelling and Fichte; that in that city should be the first systematic, honest study of Hegel by the first society of speculative philosophy; that in that city should be that spiritual awakening embodied in the "St. Louis group," whose study and freedom of thought in time produced the Concord School of Philosophy. The explanation must be found by going back to the French Revolution and then coming up to the German Revolution of 1848.

After several years my interest in speculative philosophy waned. One reason for this was that I no longer resided in St. Louis. But the effects of my contact with Harris and his group yet remain. I concern myself little with labels. Perhaps that is chiefly because I have found that the meaning to each person is peculiar to him and differs more or less from its meaning to this or that other person. Transcendentalism, pragmatism — Emerson, Kant, Pierce, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel — these stand not for the same to any two persons and may be wide apart in meaning and implication to two friends; witness the supposed relation of the philosophy of Emerson and of Kant. I must confess that among those called philosophers more and more I have found interest and solid ground in Aristotle and Plato — and in Socrates most of all! But Plato has lasted best! And has, I think, most molded me. It is comforting to think that the Beautiful is the shining splendor of self-movement (better conceived by Aristotle and better expressed as "the unmoved mover"); that it is the appearance of self activity in matter that gives it its beauty; that the soul is immortal because it is the very essence of self-movement — movement is its essential nature, it must always be self-active, progressing, hence can never die; and the "unmoved mover" is also the Good — Creator of the world and maker of the intellectual processes. "Having no envy, He desired that all things should be as like Himself as possible." One yet wiser taught his disciples to declare that "God is Love." I think it was inevitable that Harris should be criticized for his "orthodoxy" more than anything else; that he should oppose the deep yet noisy current that threatened to carry away much that is called " religion " and that most threatened the Christian religion. Religion is, from the nature of man and of truth, essential to happiness and to the well-being of mankind. That people which is losing its religion, whatever it may be, is in danger. Material wealth and power are of little consequence when their acquisition has been at the expense of a compelling sense of moral responsibility on the part of the individual, the community, and the nation.

CHAPTER XX

LITERARY ST. LOUIS

WOMEN IN LITERATURE

SIMULTANEOUSLY with the literary prominence of the Midland, with St. Louis as its capital, came a striking development: the prominence if not the predominance of women in the literary production of America.

Taking up that treasure of my library, "The Prose Writers of America," by Rufus Wilmot Griswold, second and revised edition published in Philadelphia in 1847, I find that we must go two thirds through the massive volume to encounter a woman! Only five women are considered to be of sufficient literary importance to be given space. The volume has 552 pages and the women are given a total of 31 — less than six percent. The most generously treated as regards space and criticism is Lydia Maria Child, who is given eight pages. It is illuminating as to literary fashions in the forties that of the extracts from her books the most space is given to "A Banquet at Aspasia's," in which the reader is introduced to Pericles, Phidias, Hermippus, Plato, and others. It was the vogue for an author to make a display, at all hazards, of classical learning. The author who could not work in at least three Latin quotations per page was of a poor sort. Nearly all the rest of the space accorded Mrs. Child is occupied by an extract which begins, "In a pleasant English garden." This also is very enlightening as to the popular writing of the period.

Caroline M. Kirkland is a remarkable exception and it is evidence of the good judgment of Griswold that he gave her almost as much space as he gave Mrs. Child, for it is occupied by an extract from the book in which she wrote instructively and charmingly of her life in the wilds of Michigan in the eighteen thirties. She actually wrote, not of English lords and ladies and their servants, but of the farmers who were her neighbors! Of the other women, Eliza Leslie is given six pages, Catherine M. Sedgwick seven, and Margaret Fuller three. Griswold was the leading critic of his time and it is only too plain that, while he made a conscientious effort to be just, he was skeptical about the intellectual work of women. I can not forbear from quoting one sentence of what he has to say about Margaret Fuller. He notes that " the author is ill satisfied that there should be differences in the rank and opportunities of the sexes," and proceeds to say: " Like the rest of that diverting company of women who have contemplated a nullification of certain of the statutes of nature, she would but have choice of places and vocations." Which now seems to be a very modest and only partial desire.

If we take the " Library of American Literature," edited by Stedman and Hutchinson, published when St. Louis was at its literary zenith, we will find forty-one men listed before we come to a woman. Then we will find two women, but they are hardly allowed to intrude at all. Margaret Winthrop is given space for " A Puritan Wife to Her Husband " and " The Trust of a Godly Woman " — both very respectful letters to her husband and both scarcely taking a page. The other woman, Anne Bradstreet, is allowed small space for " A Love Letter to Her Husband," and also for " Meditations Divine and Moral," of which the first reads: "A ship that bears much sail and little ballast is easily overset; and that man whose head hath great abilities and his heart little or no grace, is in danger of foundering." And going on with our search we find that in all the 134 years from Capt. John Smith and the 112 years from William Bradford, there were only five women, as compared with 128 men, who wrote anything worthy to go into the big eleven-volume " Library of American Literature "!

Of course the women writers make a more numerous showing after that, yet during all of the literary supremacy of New England, of New York City, of Philadelphia, men far outnumbered women on the literary stage; at times almost to the exclusion of women. The women authors were regarded with supercilious tolerance. But since the literary product of St. Louis and its tributary territory first attracted so much attention in the late seventies, the women authors have surpassed the men. The leader of the St. Louis group was a woman. She stood above all the others. And of all the authors resident in the Midland, the only other during that period to measure up to her in excellence of work was a woman.

MARY NOAILLES MURFREE

WHEN I went to St. Louis Miss Murfree was the outstanding writer of fiction. She was the best known of all the St. Louis group and her coterie was the largest.

About 1880 a Charles Egbert Craddock began to write short stories and novels. They were about the mountain people of East Tennessee. His writings appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*. They made a great hit, for they were very interesting and were the first authentic stories of these mountain people. (I write that, knowing of the writings of others.) In 1884 appeared the first volume of Craddock's production. During the years 1884 to 1888 seven big books from his pen were published and everyone was a "best seller." There was something peculiar about his pen. Certainly it was a broad-pointed stub pen, and furthermore, he bore down on it hard. He wrote such a heavy masculine hand that he must use a bottle of ink for every two chapters. His signature was so bold and heavy and striking, so outstanding, that good use was made of it for advertising purposes. In the thirty years from 1884 to 1914 that pen produced twenty-five fat books.

"In the Tennessee Mountains" and "Where the Battle was Fought" appeared in 1884; "Down the Ravine" and

"The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains" in 1885; "In the Clouds" in 1886; "The Story of Keedon's Bluffs" in 1887; "The Despot of Broomsedge Cove" in 1888; "In the Stranger People's Country" in 1891; "His Vanished Star" in 1894; and a long list of books down to "The Story of Duciehurst" in 1914.

Not all of Craddock's books dealt with the mountain people. The first did and they showed such a minute, intimate, clearly accurate knowledge of these people, their ways of living, their manner of talking and doing, their homes, farms, moonshine caves, thoughts, religion, sins, loves, and hates that it was certain Craddock had lived among the mountain people, that he had been taken as one of them into their homes, meeting-houses and moonshine caves; and this was all but incredible. Only a man more than daring, one reckless, would have ventured among these suspicious people to whom every stranger was presumptively an enemy, probably that most hated of all human vipers, a revenue agent: people fierce, rifle-toting, quick and deadly marksmen. Those not of them who ventured into the mountain coves and valleys had a way of not coming back. The mountain people took no chances. Not only were some mistaken for "revenooers," but there were deadly feuds among the mountain people — and again they took no chances: better kill half a dozen people none of whom was the right one than miss the right one.

Some time in the eighties Craddock wrote the Boston publishers that he was a she and that his-her name was Mary Noailles Murfree. The Boston publishers were not from Missouri but they had to be shown. They believed themselves to be good sports and they liked a joke, but they did not relish that anyone in Missouri thought they could be hoaxed. Miss Mary N. Murfree of St. Louis went East and in 1886 it all leaked out and the newspapers spread the news: Charles was Mary; Charles Egbert Craddock, the big, bold man with the outstanding masculine signature was a little, lame, timid woman!

Once her sister wrote me: " She had written with absorption, not with consideration of the result. I once heard her say that if the writer allows the thought of critic or publisher or printing press to get between him and his page, that work is spoiled. She was much surprised by her success. She had used a pseudonym without much thought of the matter and had signed her name to letters to publishers by initial, also without intention of disguise, and it did not seem of sufficient consequence to justify correction." She had named the hero of her first novel Charles Egbert Craddock. She put together a name that she " liked," another that she " fancied," and a third that she saw and that struck her as " a good name." When the manuscript of this first story was ready to go to the publisher she wanted a pen-name. Modest, timid, shrinking, she knew how the woman author was yet regarded, and that there would be an advantage in a masculine pen-name. She took for that name the name of the hero and gave him another. Once she told me, laughing heartily, that he never complained about it!

She was born January 24, 1850, in a beautiful home near Murfreesboro, the city that took the name of her great-grandfather, who took up a large tract of land when he came to Tennessee in 1807. He was Col. Hardy Murfree, of Revolutionary fame. The plantation on which she was born was known as Grantlands. The colonial house, built shortly after the Revolution on a large hill, was surrounded by roses and flowering shrubs and was hid by a grove of century-old oaks. A picturesque river flowed between steep, rocky banks through meadows at the west of the mansion. As Miss Fanny N. D. Murfree wrote me some years ago, this is now " scarcely a memory, having endured the shock of contending armies in the Civil War. Buildings, orchards, vineyards, trees, fences were destroyed and were replaced by thirty great redoubts and many redans, and bare tracts of uncultivatable fields." The battle of Murfreesboro was fought on this plantation.

Those that knew her testify to me that Mary Murfree was a strong, healthy, happy little girl and peculiarly joyous and sweet tempered. But the close of the sunny first half dozen years of her life was cruelly clouded by an attack of infantile paralysis, not then understood. At that time it was a "mysterious ailment" for which nothing could be done. All her life she was lame. She could stand only with difficulty. Of course her friends knew and at social and other gatherings she was always seated. But she was of sturdy, spunky stock.

She was slender and gave the appearance of being frail. I doubt if at any time in her life she weighed more than one hundred pounds. Those who certainly knew said that her eyes were gray. I remember them as dark. I know that they were luminous and very expressive; at times they glowed. Her hair was not black, but quite dark. Her face was beautiful and animated. Her manners were perfect. She was an accomplished musician and a remarkable linguist. She was a fearless equestrienne.

The family spent the hot months in the mountains of East Tennessee. In 1926 her sister wrote me:

> Her great love of nature was possibly fostered by the fact that all her earlier life she was fortunate enough to live among scenes of great beauty. For many years the warm months were passed in the summer home of the family in the Cumberland Mountains near Beersheba Springs. The view of the heights and valleys from the great rock in front of the cottage has been declared by travellers to be the most beautiful prospect on earth — "not the most sublime," it is stipulated, but "the most beautiful." She used to gaze upon that scene for hours, wanting nothing but the joy of looking upon it.

In time she became so well known to the mountain people near by, she became so trusted, that doubtless if nothing else had exerted an influence she would have been permitted to see much of their life. But there were aids — two all powerful. Mary Murfree's father was a judge, and that was of awful import to the mountain people. They feared the powerful, relentless court that was the strongest earthly force they knew. But that which gave Mary Murfree free entrance into cabin, church, and moonshine cave, was, I am sure, her lameness. The mountain people regarded as something similar to a witch or a hant the child deformed or mysteriously lame. A hunchback has been the merciless tyrant of the two hundred fierce people of a cove. I came across just such a case when, forty years ago, I accompanied an Illinois lawyer, guided by an East Tennessee judge and two trusted mountaineer friends of his, on a business trip — the inspection of many thousands of acres that took in the very recesses of the mountains; an inspection that put a quietus on a Colonel Sellers' project. Doubtless the mountain people believed that the little lame girl, with such speaking eyes, could cast a spell or bring ill luck and had some power to cause sickness or to cure. Such a cripple was different from other people and was closer to God — or the Devil; and the God of the mountain people was of such character that he was more to be feared than the Devil. Doubtless she could talk with angels — white, and also the black ones.

The little lame girl, so sunshiny yet so quiet, so confiding yet so timid, could be taken without question where a man not of the mountains would have been met by the crack of a rifle. Judge Murfree, jurist, author, and lover of all that is fine in nature and art, loved with a love that worshipped his unfortunate daughter and saw to it that she had every advantage to study the mountain people. She loved the outdoors with an ardent love, yet she was studious. She read the newspapers and many books. She was an entrancing talker. Any company that had her for one of it, knew that it was fortunate.

I first met her in a large gathering in, as I remember it, some church. The only fact about that evening that I remember distinctly is that I met Mary Noailles Murfree. It was, I think, in the winter of 1883–84. It was probably before her first book had been published and of course it was before it was known that she was Charles Egbert Craddock. I remember that I yet had the feeling of strangeness in some St. Louis companies: the folk who danced and sang and spoke several languages. I had gone with two such people to the church. They were friendly and kind, but they were pretty, lively girls, and toward the close of the evening I found myself among strangers. I seemed to be in the way where I was and I moved toward a corner.

I MEET MARY NOAILLES MURFREE

As I walked toward the corner I approached a small, dark-eyed, dark-haired woman, seated, and talking with several friends. I had thought that she was observing me for some minutes. As I came near her she looked at me with those speaking eyes and smiled and spoke to me. At once her friends spoke also and I surmised that they had observed my having lost my friends and had mentioned it. Later I knew that my surmise was correct. I would have passed on, but I was engaged in conversation for possibly five minutes, about the evening's entertainment, and how long I had been in St. Louis, and what about the city I liked most, and what I was doing.

As soon as I said that I was editing *South and West* the little woman said, "Oh, you are the man who pokes so much fun at Mr. DeMenil." I was. My friends came hurrying up and the conversation ended.

It was nearly two years, I think, before I knew that the little woman who had first spoken to me was Charles Egbert Craddock. Only a very few indeed knew, at that time, of the identity of Miss Murfree and Mr. Craddock.

When I explained the episode to my two friends they said it was just like her to speak to me — the Murfrees were of the most exclusive, reserved society people, but Mary was always doing bizarre things like that. Yet her speaking to *me was* surprising. It was remarkable that she came to the party, they continued. She did not go to many gatherings of that sort. She went only to little companies of close friends. She must have come to the church because she thought it was her duty to do so. Doubtless that was why she spoke to me. She was of the élite. She went into the best society circles. The *Spectator* always mentioned what the Murfrees did.

I met her two or three times after that and always she remembered me. Each time that she saw me her face lit up. I will always remember her eyes, which impressed me as they did but few. And always I thought they were dark. The last time we met we chatted for several minutes. It was after it was known that she was Charles Egbert Craddock and it was then that she told me about stealing that name from the hero of her first story. Twice when we had met before she had asked me if I had read certain books and liked them and each time she had asked about her own books. Of course I did not then know that she had written these books. Fortunately each time I spoke to her enthusiastically about the books concerning which she had asked me. I praised Charles Egbert Craddock to Mary N. Murfree!

"I LIKE TO BE PARTICULAR"

SHE not only wrote: she rewrote, revised, and wrote again. For weeks at a time she scarcely stopped to eat. No one entered her room without her express request. The remonstrances of her family were of no avail.

In 1925 her sister Fanny wrote me:

> In any line of effort it was her joy to toil untiringly. In her literary work she was often remonstrated with by members of her family on the plea that she took too much pains, that much effort was wasted. She would laughingly quote Scott's phrase, which she greatly admired, "I like to be particular." This phase of her temperament explains what many people have wondered at — the elaborate minuteness of her delineations. For instance, in the legal points of her plots it would have wounded her cruelly to have made a mistake, even if unnoticed; and in the demonstrations of the field fortifications in "Where the Battle was Fought" and in "The Spectre of Power," etc. In regard to this latter volume a French critic pointed out that the engineering work was peculiarly remarkable in that the terms and the delineations were of the time — 1761, instead of those of the present day. The study that she gave to the military engineering

of that time (through old French treatises) with their queer archaic spelling, was really arduous, although, as the story is written it does not express the labor any more than the passage of a railway train across a river — a smooth and swift transit — expresses the time and labor required to construct a bridge.

She never let a point escape her. For instance, very many of the histories chronicling the fate of Fort Louden, gave Captain John Stuart as the name of the commandant. For some reason she was persuaded that this was a mistake, and although there was authority for the statement, and although the incident was so remote in point of time that the uncertainy might be of no consequence, she was not satisfied until she had made a careful examination and had secured the facts from no less a source than the official records of the British Museum, which explicitly state that Captain Paul Demere was the commandant at the fort and Captain Stuart was the second in command, giving also the names of the Cherokee chiefs signing the terms of capitulation and even the names of the interpreters. Many, many such instances show her conscientious interpretation of the requirements of her work.

DeMenil, who was the law partner of her brother and knew her so well, wrote me:

> Her study was in the third story of the house, and was absolutely forbidden to intruders. Servants never entered it, and members of the family went to it only under special circumstances. When working, Miss Murfree retired to this study, and was lost to the outside world. She generally worked from nine in the morning until dark. She is not a rapid or finished composer; her writings are the result of the most exacting and conscientious labor. The first sketch, which is written off rapidly and fluently, is worked over and over again until it satisfies the exacting requirements of the author's conceptions. Every word is gauged and carefully weighed. . . . Her brother once told me that his sister was not only an indefatigable worker, but also untiring in her researches after the minutest facts, and would spend hours upon hours in verifying the minutest details. A legal question was involved in a point in her " Where the Battle was Fought." She consulted both her father and her brother, but even after so doing she was not entirely satisfied until she had, as he said, with a smile, " wasted several weeks over law books and court decisions in law journals."

To me it has always been a real satisfaction when reading anything to be sure that any statement of fact is correct.

I think of this often when reading the present-day rapidly written, slipshod, careless stuff.

I have never known it to be noted by anyone else, but to me it is obvious that there are several points of similarity between Miss Murfree and an English novelist of the same period, justly popular, Henrietta E. V. Palmer, who used the pen name of John Strange Winter, and whose first novel appeared in book form in 1878. (She married Arthur Stannard in 1884.) She wrote as intimately of the British soldier and his life as Mary N. Murfree wrote of the Tennessee mountaineer and his life. In the case of both Miss Palmer and Miss Murfree, the subject chosen and the manner of treatment accorded with the masculine name signed. Ruskin said that " Mrs. Stannard is the author to whom we owe the most finished and faithful rendering ever yet given of the character of the British soldier." I do not hesitate to advise the reader, when digging up the books of Charles Egbert Craddock, to dig up also some of the novels of John Strange Winter. They will well repay reading, although he will find them inferior to the novels of Craddock. It was impossible for Mrs. Stannard to know soldier life as Miss Murfree knew the East Tennessee mountaineer life; and Miss Murfree was the greater artist. Perhaps the reader will not agree to this after he, or she, has read " Mignon, or Bootles' Baby."

HONOR TO WHOM HONOR IS DUE

WHY have I given so much space to Mary N. Murfree? Not the least is that a part of what is said, that which speaks of her attitude toward her work and her methods of work, emphasizes that merited literary fame can be counted on to be gained only by hard, conscientious work. Truly, " genius is the capacity for taking infinite pains." None too soon can the beginner with the pen realize that slovenly writing is, for 499 of each 500 writers, poor writing, writing that will not permanently succeed, the results of which will not endure.

Another reason is that Mary N. Murfree was a pioneer. Brave were the men and women that ventured into unknown forests, on to strange, forbidding prairies:

> But bolder they who first outcast
> Their moorings from the habitable past,
> And ventured, chartless, on the sea
> Of storm tossed human liberty.

And equally brave is the author who ventures into new fields, and of them none has been more venturesome than Mary Murfree, who dared to write of the poor, ignorant mountain people. In that lies the peculiar significance of her books. She had the wisdom to write about the people she knew. Up to 1884 few of our authors had thought that there was fictional value in ordinary people living average, commonplace lives. Miss Murfree recognized that such people, even ignorant, unschooled, uncouth people, worked and played, loved and hated, won and lost; had bodies, minds, souls; rejoiced and suffered. And she put it all, alive, pulsing, glowing, in her books. Yet another reason, and I am sure that I am not foolish to allow it to move me or to avow it, when Mary N. Murfree and a lonesome, diffident youth were of the same assemblage, she spoke to him!

The physical affliction of her childhood which went with her through life, might have embittered some. In her it resulted in greater sympathy, in exquisite graciousness and kindness to the poor and lone. There was a kinship of that feeling for the mountain people that put soul into the books about them, and that feeling for the hard-pressed that led her to show kindness to a bashful, struggling youth. At this moment, in the cities of the world are hundreds of thousands of lonesome, poor, awkward, ambitious, young men among strangers. And for each of these there is a girl to match in all particulars. God bless any who may speak kindly to any of these, perhaps inviting them to the church or even the home!

FANNY N. D. MURFREE

I HAVE mentioned Mary N. Murfree's sister. That sister was kind and gracious when, in the spring and summer of 1925, I prepared my lectures on authors. April 16, 1925, she wrote me:

> I am sending a line or two of my dear sister's handwriting. I hesitated what to send, but it occurred to me that perhaps the enclosed would be most interesting because of the D. A. R. connection.

She sent an application for membership in the D. A. R. filled out and approved by Mary N. Murfree, who at the time was Tennessee State Regent. (She knew that my wife and I are members of the Revolutionary patriotic societies.)

Fanny N. D. Murfree has much talent for writing, but she has had published only one book: "Felicia," published in 1891. I know that something akin to exalted sisterly loyalty held Miss Fanny Murfree back from extensive and successful authorship. The death of her mother made her the household director and this hindered her giving her life to the pen. Possibly she thought that she would be fatally overshadowed by her sister. I do not think so. Her love for her sister is most admirable and pathetic, and mounts up to adoration. In October 1927, I gave myself the great pleasure and honor of being received for a short time in her home in Murfreesboro. I found her surrounded by big boxes filled with newspaper clippings about her sister. She explained that she was looking them over. I should have been surprised if I had not found her so employed.

"Felicia" deals with people of wealth, culture, energy, ambition, talent. But it was written to be read, and was read, by all classes. It was successful. It is far more than just a tale to amuse, to entertain. It is a deep, subtle study of the inevitable results of the marriage of two people of different backgrounds, different inheritance and different environment, different ideas and ambitions, different evaluations. It is a pity that "Felicia" can not be read by all young people before they marry. Yet for them to do so would be futile — we do not stop to reason when we are in love. Cupid is the successful foe of cool consideration. I think I will recommend "Felicia" to married people. It may have a good effect when they are happily divorced and are seeking second mates.

ALEXANDER N. DEMENIL

WHILE Mary N. Murfree was the best of those sometimes well called "the St. Louis group of authors," and which included a score not residents of St. Louis, the best known of that group was Alexander N. DeMenil.

It was not until after my first meeting with Miss Mary N. Murfree, when her whimsical kindness meant so much to me, that authors became real to me. I read with more eagerness all that I found in newspapers and magazines about them. I was much interested in them as persons.

From the very first week I was in St. Louis I heard much about Alexander N. DeMenil. All St. Louisans knew of him. He was editor and publisher of the *St. Louis Magazine;* interested in poetry as well as prose, and in the romantic as well as the realistic in literature; more inclined to enjoy literature than to produce it; the friend of the young author and the unsparing, but just, critic of the experienced; rich, cultured, a brilliant talker, jolly. His followers included many of the followers of Miss Murfree. He and the Murfree family were close friends. His *St. Louis Magazine* was creating a stir. Of course the publication of a literary magazine in St. Louis was such a bold venture that it challenged attention and criticism. Of the St. Louis authors of the 1880's, he was the most conspicuous, the best known in St. Louis, and the one with the most personal friends and admirers. Few authors have been as popular as a man. And this popularity, founded on an increasing respect and a regard that deepened into love, continued in enlarging measure until his death on Thanksgiving Day, 1928.

Born in 1849, he obtained from the Academy of the Christian Brothers his B. S. in 1869, his M. S. in 1871, and his A. M. in 1872. Washington University bestowed the degree of LL. B. in 1871. He practised law, his partner being the only brother of Mary N. Murfree, from 1871 to 1882. He was elected to the House of Delegates of St. Louis in 1877 and the City Council in 1879. He was wealthy. The law was his play; he worked at and with literature. Business he could almost ignore; art he loved. Cultured, polished, of the highest social standing, he worked hard to develop the literary taste and the appreciation of art in the city he loved, and he was as democratic in tastes and manner as he was aristocratic in breeding and position. He gave especial attention to the literature of the Louisiana Purchase.

His mother's maiden name was Emelie Sophie Chouteau. She was a direct descendant of the founder of St. Louis, Pierre Chouteau, and his famous wife, Madame Chouteau. (One of the most complete and masterly pieces of work Dr. DeMenil ever did was his brochure, presenting a long array of facts, gathered with much labor from the records of old churches and from municipal archives in New Orleans and St. Louis, that thoroughly disproves the silly lies told about Madame Chouteau; proving that when she was alleged to have been guilty of misconduct she was a thousand miles from the scene or that the other party to the alleged misconduct had been dead for years!) There should be no name higher or prouder in St. Louis than the name of Chouteau.

In 1883 DeMenil was most devoted to his *St. Louis Magazine*. This was a monthly and had among its contributors some of the best authors of the South and Southwest. It was illustrated, and that meant a good deal, for it meant the employment of steel engravings or the very best woodcuts. The *St. Louis Magazine* was loyally supported by that city and the greater part of the South, and all of the Southwest. It had a large circulation for any magazine published anywhere in the United States at that time. It contained essays, short and continued stories, articles on scientific and philosophical subjects, poetry, and devoted quite a little space to humor. The 1880's were the period of humor in journalism. There were not only the humorous publications like *Texas Siftings* and the *Arkansaw Traveller*, but many daily papers made their humorous department a prominent feature, and some of these gained a national reputation; notably the Danbury (Conn.) *News*, the Detroit *Free Press*, the Burlington (Ia.) *Hawkeye*, and the Laramie *Boomerang*.

In the early eighties the "zinc type" or etching was yet quite a newspaper novelty. Newspaper men pride themselves on being quick to perceive and use any utility that is discovered or invented. The zinc etching for newspaper work shows how slow they were. There was great need of such a thing. The steel engraving was out of the question for newspaper illustration. The woodcut was often too expensive and nearly always too slow. Yet it was not until three score years and ten after Blake had discovered the process that the newspapers began to make extensive use of that with which dark-eyed Kate, one of the sweetest and dearest and most sympathetic and noble of the wives that have made a wife's contribution to literature and art, had so lovingly busied herself. I made use of it. I had at least one funny picture in the funny page of each issue of the *South and West*. In one issue I had a picture of DeMenil on his knees, scrubbing his office floor. This was made from a sketch sent me by a young poet who had some of her verse printed in the *St. Louis Magazine;* also in *Lippincott's Magazine*, and other high class publications. (She was a mischievous girl who used her pencil to live.) The picture appeared in 1884, and I had forgotten all about it until just forty years later when DeMenil sent me a copy of the paper containing the picture. It is one of the two copies of the *South and West* that I have.

Dr. DeMenil was a director of the Louisiana Purchase

Exposition and president of the Belgian Relief Fund for Missouri. He was honorary president of the Société Française de St. Louis and member of many literary societies. He was the historian of the literature of Missouri and the Louisiana Purchase.

His "Literature of the Louisiana Purchase" appeared in 1904. It is a work so complete, conscientious, and ably critical that it has since been recognized that no other history of the literature of the Louisiana Purchase up to 1904 can be needed or would be worthy to put beside DeMenil's volume. In 1905 appeared the volume of poems entitled, "Songs in Minority." In 1910 was published his second volume of poetry, "Forest and Town." A third volume, "Poets and Poetry," was published later. In 1920 came from his able pen "A Century of Missouri Literature." His poetry is of a high order; plainly the work of a man of real poetic abilities, imaginative, a master of words, polished, refined. He kept his feet on the ground, but his eyes saw far and on the high altitudes.

A PERSONAL NOTE

I BELIEVE that for more than forty years I had the honor of being able to call Dr. DeMenil my friend. I early learned to admire and respect him; almost as soon I learned to love him. Always he was kind, courteous, gracious. We lived in the same city for some years; and for nearly forty years more we were separated by an easy journey. Yet we never met! What strange freaks of fortune, what incredible trifles of life, just happen! Years ago we decided that we should not meet on this earth. If we did we would destroy a unique of such rarity that it should be preserved.

Not until about three years ago did it occur to me that I had made myself related to Dr. DeMenil. The relationship was not close enough to hurt him. My wife's mother was of St. Louis Chouteau stock. Her maiden name was Chouteau. When I married I thought that I had gained all that a man could properly wish for in a wife and each year has shown me that I got a great deal more of all that is excellent and lovable than I had expected. And to cap it all, my wife brought me relationship with that citizen of St. Louis that the worth-while people of the city most honored and loved.

Dr. DeMenil was an interesting letter-writer. Two sentences from the first of his letters I pick up show how busy was this man so near eighty years of age at the time, and who had his full share of bereavements and afflictions:

> I am writing an account of "The St. Louis Book-Authors" for the *Times*, to be continued through some 15 to 20 issues of the paper. I am just a little bit busy — so far five lectures before historical, literary, Shakespeare and the Jewish Orthodox Societies — all during the first three weeks of November.

I think he was fully justified in writing this — in December 1922:

> I feel like a carpet-bagger since 20 or 25 years. It may all be for the best, but — but — I regret the passing of the St. Louis of 30 or 40 or 50 years ago. People have lost their freedom and their individuality and their personal rights. Nothing is permanent; nearly everything changes from day to day. But then, I've got a bad reputation: they say, "When you want to hear somebody or other get h——s, put the Doctor on for a speech!"

In reply to something from him I wrote him in January 1925, that I was not the John M. Stahl in the motion picture business. He wrote: "Good! good! You relieve my conscience. 'I seen it' and I said to myself how in thunder am I going to lie to Stahl when he asks me my opinion of the poor stuff? Forgive me for accusing you." And this, written January 4, 1924, is indeed all too true and should be considered by the South — I am indeed sure of that since I am again getting well acquainted with this part of our country:

> I have believed with Poe since many years — not because Poe said it, but as the logical result of my own readings — that the Southern authors have never received the just consideration that they are entitled to through their writings.

Personally, I have no sectional interest in the matter, being a strictly Western innocent, a descendant of several generations of Western pioneers.

Poe's Raven and his Bells have been ringing in my ears ever since college days; and those exquisite lyrics, Pinckney's "A Health," Philip Pendleton Cooke's "Florence Vane," Richard Henry Wilde's "My Life is Like a Summer Rose," and the battle hymns: Key's "Star Spangled Banner," O'Hara's "Bivouac of the Dead," and Father Ryan's "Conquered Banner," I believe will ever be new in American literature through the coming years.

Again, I am so absolutely antiquated that I dare unblushingly confess that even in late years I still read over again William Gilmore Simm's romances of the Revolution and his border tales of early South Carolina.

Dr. DeMenil, come from generations of pioneers, well classified himself as a Westerner, but I know how dear to him were characteristics that flourish best in Southern soil and Southern air and how much of his heart went into his words about Southern literature. The South has produced much of our very best literature. And the South is forgetting. The South has young, talented, hard-working, honest authors; and the South is not recognizing, encouraging, supporting them as it should.

ST. LOUIS: THE HOME OR THE MECCA

WHATEVER place may be given St. Louis as a philosophic and literary center; or its authors and the other authors more or less in the literary movement of the seventies and eighties of which it was the acknowledged capital: it is certain that this literary movement, which involved three fourths of the authors of the South, was a significant phenomenon. It was of most significance in and to the South — all south of the Ohio River, and the state of Missouri and the Southwest that reached up to that state. The condition of the South and the Southwest at the beginning of the seventies is to be considered. It had been defeated and humiliated; part of its wealth — the slaves — had been, as property, destroyed, and the Southerners had not yet learned how to make the negroes more productive and more to the gain of the whites, the gain being generally and much more advantageously diffused. After the war came the "carpet-bagger" era — almost as destructive as the war. If during the seventies and eighties the South had produced only such things as Ryan's "Conquered Banner" or Hayne's "Carolina" no one would have been surprised; it would have been what would reasonably have been expected. But the South was braver than that; its spirit, unbroken and strong and forward looking, was voiced by Henry W. Grady in his eloquent address in the North. While the authors of the South and of the West combined are few in the annals of the seventies and the eighties compared with those of the rest of the United States, they will not be without honor as high as that accorded any if right consideration is given conditions in the South; and as well in the West, where the task has been and was to make farms out of wilderness and to build railroads and cities. It is to be regretted that the spirit voiced by Grady and others is not even yet the spirit of some.

As has been indicated, the ascendancy of St. Louis began in the second half of the 1870's. The literary predominance of that city lasted for about fifteen years. Beginning shortly after 1890, that literary democracy of which St. Louis was the capital city declined in leadership, excellence, and inspirative influence, both comparatively and actually. As St. Louis declined, Chicago gained.

St. Louis was the literary capital to not only the few authors that resided in it, but to some hundred others, who were interested in what were termed the St. Louis philosophic movement and the St. Louis literary movement, or something of that sort. They were interested in the St. Louis authors also. This century of authors were residents of a territory which may be thus roughly demarked: All of "the South," which included Missouri; southern Illinois and Indiana; the Southwest; and a part of Kansas. Of course in this territory there were authors not of the century. This was especially true of the authors of Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, and Kentucky. But to the large majority of the authors of this territory St. Louis was a literary capital; *the* literary capital. To some it was more than that. A few were adherents; probably a very few were satellites. Some doubtless turned their faces daily toward St. Louis and prayed for literary light and guidance. There were yet others who regarded the earnestness, at times painful earnestness, of some of the authors and other residents of St. Louis with amusement, and the claims made for the city and its authors with tolerant skepticism. Yet even they were, under the surface, as the large majority were openly and often enthusiastically, in sympathy with the aspirations and efforts of the St. Louis group; were gratified that literature of such quality and in such quantity was being produced in the territory of which St. Louis was the acknowledged literary capital or revered mecca; and allied themselves, some closely, some distantly, with the two movements, the score of authors, and the numerous intellective and literary hopes and projects of that city.

CHAPTER XXI

LOSS AND GAIN

MY SISTER

MY LIFE in St. Louis, full as it was, lacked one thing above all else: the companionship of my youngest sister, one of "The Inseparables."

And those happy years in St. Louis were busy years indeed, with the manifold work of my pen; with time and thought occupied with speculative philosophy and philosophers and authors and books; and also with other forms of recreation (recreation is not lack but variety of employment), particularly the theater. (Most people could accomplish twice as much if they used the time they really waste.)

There was worth-while entertainment by actors and singers in those days. The first years I was in St. Louis I heard Patti and other notable singers; and saw Edwin Booth and Barrett and McCullough and Modjeska and Jauneschek and Clara Morris and Kate Claxton and Louis Mann and many others of note.

I remember that I wrote the little sister a full account of a play I saw, and her comments were so piquant that I sent her letter to Clara Morris. She was the leading lady that night at the theater about which I wrote my sister.

At that time one of the leading stores of the city was that of Penny & Gentles, who also manufactured women's wear. Consequently they employed many women and girls. The proprietors of the store were kind and charitable employers; and one evening, when I had a seat in the balcony (as often), they brought all the women and girls in their employ to see — and hear — Clara Morris. They had seats on both sides and back of me and before the play was finished it was so damp in my location that I sat with feet elevated on my heels. On no other occasion have I seen so many tears. I can understand why Bernhardt said, when she saw Clara Morris in Camille, "She is not acting; she is suffering." Her early life had something to do with that. For among the pathetic figures of Adams County, Illinois, was the girl known as Clara Morrison until she went on the stage as Clara Morris, when she was thirteen. The great emotional actress tells of her years in Adams County in her book, "Left in Charge." It tells of her old neighbors of the Rock Creek-Lima-Marcelline neighborhoods, so familiar to me. Some of these people are given their right names in the book; others are so slightly disguised that they are readily identified.

It was about that damp night in the balcony that I wrote the little sister. Clara Morris acknowledged receipt of the little sister's letter in a charming note — no, so long it was a letter — in which she referred to Adams County, for in the note I had sent her I mentioned that my sister's post office of Big Neck was in Adams County, Illinois. Until I got the letter from Clara Morris I did not know that she had ever been in Adams County.

I think it was always really understood that as soon as the little mother could let her youngest go out of the home, she was to come to me.

She taught herself stenography, using the same Munson book that I had found so hard to master. She taught herself thoroughly and was the best secretary I ever had; taught herself, as she said, "so I can help John." My father very rarely expressed emotions, but several times he told me, with much feeling, of her pathetic struggles with Munson's dashes and hooks and curves. "She worked so hard on her shorthand," he said, "because, you know, she just wanted to be with you, and wouldn't be with you unless she could help you." When she was just into her teens, she came to live with me.

She worked hard in my office outside of school hours. She insisted on doing that. Truly her mother was right when she wrote me, "There isn't a lazy bone in her body."

Almost as soon as she came to live with me she took up drawing with the best teachers available to her, and then painting. She made rapid progress. Her teachers were enthusiastic. She certainly showed great talent. She found her greatest pleasure of all in her painting.

We took the chautauqua courses, in a little circle of friends; and our certificates had three sets of seals. She spent a short vacation at the big parent chautauqua in New York State. She went camping with friends. We went on trips to Chicago. She read a great deal. She had devoted friends.

More and more she used her pen. Had she lived until she was forty she would have been a noted author. She signed "Topsy Stahl" or "Jess Judson" to articles for my paper. I am sure that always she was happiest when she sat before her easel. I have the first work she did with charcoal — a portrait of Tennyson; and those who see it say, not knowing who made it, "Oh, what a good picture! What a wonderful likeness of Tennyson!"

How plainly I see her now, seated before her easel, in the partially wrecked chair and wearing the disreputable smock she liked, a brush in her hand, poised!

CERTAIN CHICAGO CLUBS

FOR several reasons I decided to make my home in Chicago and early in 1893 my sister and I moved our goods and chattels to that unique and admirable example of village giantism. Of the reasons for our moving to Chicago two far outweighed the others: residence in Chicago would put me in closer touch with and easier access to the advertising agencies and the largest advertisers; and my sister could attend the art school, then housed in the Atheneum building on Van Buren Street.

The first Sunday after we had moved to Chicago my sister and I attended the morning service at St. Mark's Episcopal Church. She brought with her to Chicago a letter of introduction from the dean of the Episcopal Cathedral at Quincy and also from the bishop of the diocese of which Quincy was the see city, to the rector of the Episcopal church nearest our Chicago residence. This was St. Mark's Church and the rector was the Rev. William White Wilson. He was a man of unusual abilities and attainments. He had an enthusiastic, but nicely discriminating appreciation of the best literature and of all the fine arts. He had been educated for the law, but, making service to others the object of his life, he chose the ministry.

In 1893 St. Mark's was a numerous and prosperous church. Its people received my sister and me cordially. There was a literary society in connection with the church. It had a large membership. It had members that did not attend St. Mark's. It had a deserved reputation that attracted outsiders. It was what I thought a literary society should be. It was not altogether literary. Each summer it had at least one excursion and picnic, and each winter it had sled — note the word, not sleigh — rides. Every winter of the nineties there was enough snow for sleighing for weeks. Huge sleds drawn by four or six horses were hired. These sleds had "boxes" or "bodies" so large that as many as thirty people could ride in such a sled. In addition, the load included a great deal of hay or straw and one blanket for each two people — two people, of the opposite sex, can keep much more comfortable on a sleigh or sled ride with only one blanket than with two. The members of St. Mark's Literary Society got a large measure of both profit and pleasure from the activities of the society. My sister and I became members.

I can not recall just when I was elected president of St. Mark's Literary Society. I was always being elected president of something. That became quite a joke with my friends. For some years I was occasionally introduced to a gathering, at which I was to preside or act as toastmaster, as "the literary president of Chicago." I think the first rivet to fasten this undeserved reputation on me was my presidency of St. Mark's Literary Society.

I have mentioned the sled rides of this society. I have the following:

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WEATHER BUREAU,
AUDITORIUM TOWER,

Chicago, Ill., December 15, 1897

Mr. JOHN M. STAHL,
President the Literary Society,
St. Mark's Episcopal Church,
Chicago, Illinois,

Dear Sir: —

Referring to your recent favor, of the 14th inst., making requisition, on behalf of your Society, for 'about eight inches of solid, crisp snow, and weather not too cold on New Year's eve,' I beg to say that while we are overrun from all quarters with orders for this particular brand of weather for the day and night in question, we will contribute to the best of our ability to the success of your grand sled ride and oyster feast.

Very truly yours
E. B. GARRIOTT
Professor, Weather Bureau

A good many of our friends were members of Bohemia or the Bohemian Club. Some were members of the Cypher Club. The World's Fair had brought to Chicago queer ideas and people. Many people in Chicago after the World's Fair wanted to be artists or authors and some thought they were artists or authors. They thought that to be real artists or authors they must act like the artists and authors in Paris they read about. Some thought that this included being poor, and dirty of person and garments, and drinking much beer and smoking a strong, black pipe —

the pipe was limited to the males. There was a decent, sensible element. The result was a number of clubs of different degrees of the unconventional and bizarre. The membership of the Bohemian Club was of the better class. It included some of the most interesting people in the city and also a few of the most ignorant, silly, and repulsive. There was the Cypher Club also. Neither it nor the Bohemian Club was long lived. My sister and I were invited frequently to these two clubs. I do not recall that she ever went to the Cypher Club. I did a few times. We went to the Bohemian Club rather frequently.

Whenever I think of the Cypher Club I think of beer. It was a very beery club. But then in the nineties beer was thought quite harmless; almost too effeminate to be respectable. Furthermore, in Chicago the *soi-disant* artists thought they must drink beer and dress oddly to be artists. That, of course, died out nearly altogether years ago — a few of the weaker minded held to it until recently — a very few do yet. The Cypher Club had a weekly publication — *The Cypher*. It blazoned this on its first page:

> A place that is nowhere, somewhere, everywhere. A place that exists in the minds of those who love it. A place where hearts beat high, and hands grasp firm; where poverty is no disgrace, and where charity does not chill. A place where kindred virtues have fled for refuge, and where Mrs. Grundy has no sway.

In *The Cypher* of March 21, 1896, is a letter from "A Non-Bohemian," a woman, which tells at great length of a night at this club. I will make a few short extracts:

> At first I was a bit shocked at their reckless freedom in talking of such a place openly. Then I became perplexed over their ideas of morals, purity, beer, smoke, and the "atmosphere," which they continually quoted. . . . I never saw anything like it. . . . I do not mind telling, confidentially, that I am no "bud," and I have been about a great deal. . . . A neat colored maid asked if we would have any beer or coffee. . . . I have drank beer, I have drank wine, have even smoked a cigarette or two (mind, now — you are never to tell who is saying all this), but it has always been within

the recesses of the strictest privacy. . . . Mary Evelyn Chisholm went to the platform and rang a cowbell! a common, ordinary cowbell! . . . Mrs. Chisholm said that "Ike Fleming" would favor us with a sermon — a Scotch one. . . . It was always the unexpected that was happening.

In 1896 it was much more "awful" for a woman to smoke and to drink beer than it is in this year of grace 1929. Yet the Cypher Club, while unconventional and sometimes vulgar, was not more immoral than some very respectable clubs. It was responsible for some babies born out of wedlock — my recollection is that it was well known that a noted dancer, never married, found the father of her first child in the Cypher Club. Does she not divulge this in her autobiography, published not so long ago? But such things have occurred in some very nice clubs and even in some churches — in the old settler days of revivals they were not unknown. I have a complete list of the members of the Cypher Club at its zenith — a long list indeed; and among the members less than a score had attained literary or artistic eminence, and a very small fraction would have been guilty of anything immoral. There is probably no connection between the facts stated in the two preceding clauses.

The president, guiding genius, and dynamo of the Bohemian Club was one of the best known and popular — and interesting — women of the city. She was Mrs. Martha Evarts Holden, best known by her pen name of Amber. She died in 1896, at the age of fifty-two. She was so much the Bohemian Club that it could not survive her death. She was a woman of medium height, with hair of a golden tinge just showing some gray. Her eyes were light blue, or gray, and full of light and expression. She was at times vivacious; more often thoughtful, pensive. She had a double measure of what is called personality. She was gracious and kind to my sister.

What Amber wrote was very popular. It would not be nearly so popular now. I am not sure that is any proof of better public taste.

By her personality Amber made the warmest of friends; for an example, Mrs. Carrie Jacobs Bond, famous song writer — how often we older fellows have heard her "End of a Perfect Day"! Some two years ago Mrs. Bond was so disconsolate because she had lost her copy of Amber's best known book, "A String of Amber Beads," that I gave her my copy. One can be generous with what he does not care for. Yet I had kept that book for more than thirty years — I hardly knew why. I think the greatest reason was that Amber always noticed my sister in such a friendly way.

Moline and Rock Island, Illinois, and Davenport, Iowa, are like one city divided into three parts by the Mississippi and Rock rivers. They were three good cities for me to visit, as in each were large advertisers in papers that went to rural people. I had spent a busy Friday and Saturday in the three cities, and had intended to take the boat to St. Louis (it was yet in the day of passenger steamers on the Mississippi), when I noticed in the evening paper of June 12, 1886, that a son of Charles Dickens, who had been visiting Dr. A. W. Jamieson, a prized friend, had died the night before in Moline and on the morrow would be the funeral ceremony and burial. As the weather had been very hot, although it was only June, and I was very tired, I decided to wait over and go to the funeral the next day — Sunday. This I did. I wonder how many know that another son of Charles Dickens lies in a grave in this country — in New York City. He was Alfred Tennyson Dickens, who lectured in St. Louis in November and in Cairo, Illinois, December 1, 1911, and died in the old Astor House, New York City, after a few hours' illness, January 2, 1912.

If anyone thinks at all of putting a flower on either of these two graves, let me help him to action by quoting this from a long article by Charles Dickens in the August 1869 *Atlantic Monthly* (yes, I treasure the bound volumes of some old magazines, better than any we now have!) "On Mr. Fechter's Acting," which closes with these words:

> I can not wish my friend a better audience than he will have in the American people, and I can not wish them a better actor than they will have in my friend.

His judgment of Fechter was wrong. His judgment of the American people, which was his mature judgment, was eminently right.

When my sister and I had been in Chicago about eighteen months I happened to mention the sudden death in Moline of Capt. Francis Jeffrey Dickens, one evening when there were quite a large number of friends in our apartment. Everyone was much interested. Of those present, only my sister and I knew that a son of Charles Dickens was buried in Moline. One of the company had just bought a complete set of Dickens' books. It was decided that we would form a little club to read Dickens. The possessor of the complete set of Dickens' books was made president; other officers were chosen; and the club started on a hectic career that lasted nearly three years — and that was a good record for a study or reading or literary club in Chicago at that time. For a time I was its president. I fear that if it had not been for that club I would not have been the enthusiastic lover of Dickens I have been for years, and to my great pleasure and profit.

Before we made Chicago our home my sister and I had studied French with native teachers. French was easy for her. It was difficult for me. In St. Louis I had been associated with some French people, and with others that spoke French fluently. As a result, when my sister and I began to study French I took the lead; but she soon overtook me and then passed me easily. All our teachers said what a beautiful French accent she had, while they laughed at mine. The teachers said that she was all French, and this was apparently true: she had the wonderful black eyes and hair that one sees among the French — her mother's hair; and her mother's hair had lost none of its blackness when she died, aged eighty-seven. My sister had the French taste about all things. She delighted to retrim hats and to make "waists"

— the "shirt waist" and the dressy waist not joined to the skirt had just supplanted the tight-fitting, cruel upper story of gowns. She never bought a hat that she did not do it over several times. She delighted in that almost as much as in her painting; and she was absorbed in that, and made gratifying progress after we went to Chicago. The first month we were in Chicago we joined French classes. Later we were students at the best French school in the city. The World's Columbian Exposition had left a good many educated and cultured French people in the city. We were so fortunate as to meet a number, and we became friends. In January 1895, the French Club of Chicago (I think that was its name) was formed and I was elected president. Later another French club, smaller, with few French people in it, was formed and for a time I was president of that.

Both clubs flourished in a very quiet, unpretentious way. The first named was the more formal, because we did call the club to order and had a secretary, but on her motion we always dispensed with the reading of the minutes. Each week the one club had a long session in French; each week the other club had a session in a mixture of French and English, the English predominating. In both this was generally followed by some very light refreshments and then a social hour in French conversation — or English. And always there was some music.

The only required qualifications for membership were the ability to speak French (some) and the desire to be able to speak the best French and know the best French literature. In the membership were those with millionaire fathers and poor students who never mentioned their fathers — two, I know, did not know the names of those parents; those whose names appeared frequently in the Society Column and those without any social standing possessed or desired; those who spent much money for expensive garments and those who might easily be wearing the discarded garments of the first named, sold to the secondhand man by a valet or maid. One was superior to another only as she

— or he — spoke better French or was a better student of French literature or art, or could more knowingly discuss French affairs with French people of affairs.

I profited much more than might be supposed from my hours spent with the French people in these clubs. Those people had ideas quite different from some of mine. I appreciated painting and sculpture and music, and was not ignorant of those things; but from some of the French people I gained a greater, and especially a better, appreciation of art; and, perhaps of more value to me, some valuable information of contemporary French literature, the drama, and customs. I found much entertainment in the French clubs; I found more instruction. I was sorry when, after about three years of existence, they dwindled to extinction.

LOSS

LIFE in Chicago was full and happy to me; and I believe it was so to my sister. She was absorbed in her painting.

Our apartment had eight rooms; some of them each larger than the apartment "of three rooms efficiency" of today. We had made many friends. Our apartment was an informal meeting place. It was understood that our friends could drop in at any time, more particularly in the evening. If we were busy or did not wish a caller at that time, we said so. My sister was at art school or some studio and I was in my office much of the day. We were "at home" to all our friends each Thursday evening and nearly always on that evening the apartment was crowded. Some played and sang; some played cards, some danced, some just talked. And at the proper time some of the girls would go to the big kitchen and prepare refreshments. All was very informal; and "a good time was had by all."

In August 1896, my sister became the wife of a brilliant young surgeon of Omaha. In the following December her letters indicated she had "a little heart trouble." When she was five years old she had a very severe attack of diphtheria.

Twice while she lived with me she had this alarming, insidious disease: once the attack was very severe. I knew that she had been left with a "bad heart," as our physician said. But I was not alarmed when she wrote that her heart was troubling her. Her husband wrote reassuringly. He lectured at the Creighton Medical College — was head of an important department and some of the faculty had been called in consultation, and nothing serious was anticipated. None of her family realized that she was seriously sick until we got word that she could not join the rest of us in the Holiday reunion in western Illinois. It was the first Christmas she had not spent with our parents. I returned to Chicago January 3rd. The next day I got a line from her husband saying that she was really ill. I got my ticket for Omaha, intending to go that night. In the afternoon I got this wire from her husband:

"Edith is dead."

After a bridal tour she and her husband had "settled down like old married people," as she wrote me, in Omaha. I visited them in November and the last time I saw her dear face was when, as I left, she threw kisses at me and called to me in her adorable French. Yes, that was the last time I saw her face. I could not look on it when her brave little mother, who had fainted when word came of her death, was braver than I and saw it, framed by her coffin, for the last time; and remembered so distinctly the day she was born, and the hour.

And I remembered the little Tipsy Topsy Turvy lying on my coat in the fence corner and sharp-nosed, keen, brave Jack alert beside her, one paw on her outstretched arm.

I have an envelope addressed to me in my mother's handwriting and containing three clippings; one of them sent with the letter enclosed in the envelope:

How silently, how silently,
  The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts
  The blessing of His heaven.

No ear may hear His coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him
The Dear Christ enters in.

With that I have placed, I do not remember when, two short pieces of verse:

All silently, and soft as sleep,
The snow fell flake on flake.

Slumber, spent Earth! and dream of flowers
Till spring-time bid you wake.

Again the deadened bough shall bend
With blooms of sweetest breath.

Oh miracles of miracles,
This life that follows death.

And this — the epitaph Mark Twain wrote for the gravestone of his wife:

Warm summer sun,
Shine kindly here.
Warm Southern wind,
Blow softly here.
Green sod above,
Lie light, lie light.
Good night, dear heart,
Good night, good night.

I had this to comfort me: my sister had suffered almost no pain during her sickness, and death had come with no pain at all. She was reclining on a couch as her husband and a friend entered, and as she turned to greet them with a smile on her lips — her heart stopped.

(It was so with the little mother. She told me several times that she had prayed that she might go without pain and that she knew her prayer had been heard and would be answered as she wished.

That little mother — she had been unconscious for hours, lying so very still, breathing softly. We had every confidence in the old white-haired family physician, who had said that she had less than twenty-four hours to live and nothing could be done; but at midnight the daughter who had always remained with her and I called in another physician. He shook his head and went away. So my sister and I resumed our vigil. We wished no one to share it. The mother breathed softly. The clock struck one — two — three — four — five. She did not stir at all. Her face was peace. I thought how easily, how peacefully, my mother was breathing — and her breathing stopped; just stopped — that was all.)

No one else realized quite so well as Rev. William White Wilson what the death of my sister meant to me. He came to see me several times. Much that he said was comforting. He insisted that I go about my affairs as before — I now know that was wise advice indeed. He came for me to preside at the first meeting of the literary society after I had returned from the funeral. My friends understood. I knew that my sister wished me to sorrow as little as I could. A score of nights I awoke with a cry of joy — I had dreamed so vividly that she had come back home that sometimes I had dashed to the door before I was awake. But I did as my wise friends insisted I should — I took up life as before. I presided at St. Mark's Literary Society.

I APPOINT A COMMITTEE

I KNOW that as president of St. Mark's Literary Society I did one thing so brilliant, so able, so wise, that it atoned for all my mistakes and dullness. It was appointing a certain girl on a reception committee.

One evening this girl came to a meeting of the society. She was a stranger. Her family had just moved to the neighborhood. She had not yet attended the church or Sunday-school of St. Mark's. She was fourteen and wore her hair in two very thick, long braids. She was accompanied by her brother, who was sixteen.

About the first thing I had to do was to appoint a reception committee of seven to welcome new members and make them feel at home and see that they were introduced to the old members and so on. I inquired and got the name of that girl with the long braids and appointed on the reception committee six old members and Miss Mary Constance Chouteau Platt. Appointing the six was, of course, all right and proper, and appointing that Miss Platt, was, of course, all wrong and improper, since she was a stranger. But I ignored the whispering going on over the room. There was a very important debate that night. I do not remember the question to be debated; but among the debaters were two young lawyers, and all, but they especially, were sure that much, possibly the fate of our republican institutions, depended on the right decision of that question. And when I appointed as one of the three judges the sixteen year old brother of Miss Mary Constance Chouteau Platt, the old members, and the two young lawyers, were audibly indignant. But I stood my ground and Mr. Platt remained one of the judges although he got the notion that my choice was not popular and he wished to retire.

I was thirty-four. For several years I had heard myself spoken of freely as a confirmed old bachelor. It seemed to me that I was everlastingly being introduced to some public assemblage — I did talk around a good deal — and always I was introduced as an old bachelor and some alleged funny remarks were addressed to the unmarried women in the audience, if there were any. Generally some sarcasm was handed to me. I think no one else enjoyed introducing me quite so well as Col. B. F. Clayton. He had many opportunities to poke fun at me and set the mischievous girls on to me. He improved every one of them. At the time Mary Constance Chouteau Platt, aged fourteen, with two very long and thick braids of hair hanging down her back — she could sit on the ends of them — walked into the meeting of the St. Mark's Literary Society, I had settled it with myself that I would never marry.

Five years after I made that brilliant appointment, June

25, 1900, Miss Platt and I were married, in Grace Episcopal Church, which she attended at that time, by the Rector, Rev. Ernest M. Stires, now Bishop of Long Island. He made a good job of it, although, as previously intimated, he was so earnest and able in the telling of a fish story in what one of the ushers called "the wings," that he and I and best man Joseph M. Hirons, hopeless old bachelor (married within nine months), nearly missed the proceedings.

Miss Platt was just two months past nineteen. Mr. Stahl lacked less than two months of being forty. Our friends prophesied trouble. I will confess that it was a reasonable prognostication. If any of my old bachelor friends, insurable age forty years, had married a girl, insurable age nineteen years, I would have said that by all the mortality and life expectancy tables ever concocted, it would be rough and tumble from the time, presumably the third morning after the return from the bridal tour, when the fried potatoes for breakfast were cold and the coffee was of a sickly hue.

We have been married twenty-nine years and we have never had the least quarrel. Our love has deepened with the years.

A daughter and a son were given to us and in all their lives they have not given us a moment's anxiety about their conduct. I am certain that neither has ever knowingly disobeyed either parent. Those parents are economical of *Don'ts* about things not important. Our children have never brought us a second of sorrow. They have brought us happiness that only the parents of such children can comprehend.

I am sure every church should have a literary society.

CHAPTER XXII

SOME MIDLAND AUTHORS OF THE NINETIES

TENDING TOWARD CHICAGO

WHEN I took up my residence in Chicago in 1893, the territory which I had heard William T. Harris designate as the Upper Midlands and which had not been interested in speculative philosophy was yet crude, rough, uncultured in the eyes of the East and the South. The "original settler" was yet abroad in this land; the log cabin yet appeared on the landscape; a man dwelling in this region might write, and write well, but he could not be An Author! There was Howells; but his being born in Ohio was, in the opinion of most of the East and the South, a mistake of nature; in the eyes of the others of these superior, blest sections, he was a freak, a "sport." However, the Midland, generally called the West, did not begin until near where Ohio left off; and, further, Howells was not of the West in the opinion of the East, notwithstanding the error of his parents as to residence; for he had left Ohio when he was twenty-four to be abroad for four years, and on his return he became assistant editor of the *Atlantic Monthly.*

In fact, however, during the seventies and eighties there had appeared in the Upper Midlands some authors of real merit; and in the nineties the authors of this territory and the literary aspirations and accomplishments of Chicago challenged attention. The rich prairies were producing of fine quality more than corn and clover; the hills were yielding more than cattle.

I read "Roxy," by Edward Eggleston, before I went away from home to school in 1879. In St. Louis I read "The Circuit Rider" and "The Hoosier Schoolmaster." In 1894 or 1895 I wrote to him; my recollection is that he was doing a good deal of lecturing and my letter was about engaging him for a lecture. Those were the good old days of lectures by men who had something to say and could say it well. In my letter to him I mentioned how much I had enjoyed *The Little Corporal,* of which he had been associate editor, 1866–70 (he lived in Evanston those four years), and I spoke of the circuit riders and other ministers in his books and said that I, being country born and reared, knew such preachers, although I had never known one quite so eloquent as Russell Bigelow ("far and wide over the West had travelled the fame of this great preacher, who, though born in Vermont, was wholly Western in his impassioned manner," ran the description in "The Circuit Rider"). Mr. Eggleston wrote me at some length for so busy a man. He said that there were preachers as eloquent as Bigelow and whose sermons had as great effect. (That about the effect of the sermons was true.) He wrote that perhaps it ought not to be so, but he often thought that of the work he had done, that on *The Little Corporal* had given him the most pleasure at the time and had brought him the most love and therefore the best reward for all time; and as for being country born, he would remind me that he was born in Vevay, Indiana, in 1837. That was in Switzerland County, on the Ohio River, and even now that county has only four small towns in all of it. It was certainly "country" a hundred years ago.

The most interesting years, the growing years, of Eggleston's life were spent in the West. He was a Methodist preacher at nineteen and had pastorates in St. Paul, Stillwater, Winona, and St. Peters, and Minnesota was certainly of the West in 1858–66. His first book was published the last year he was a resident of Evanston. His work as an author was all the more important because he wrote of the people and the customs and the conditions of the West.

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY began twelve years after Edward Eggleston and carried on for a longer term of years; and always he was in and of the Midland, although he sang of the things that are in the heart or reach the heart everywhere. I suppose that he was the cause of at least five hundred young people's trying to write poetry of the dialectic sort; and while all may have failed to produce anything worth while, his success was that encouragement that did much to build up a literature in the Midland while his writings made a valuable contribution to that literature. It is fortunate for the popular author that he can not be held responsible for all the effects of his success. Once I wrote Eben E. Rexford, a good rural-minded friend, that I knew of at least a dozen young persons who were trying to write a song like his "Silver Threads among the Gold." He wired: "Heaven help me and them."

It is not generally known, I think, that the first Riley book was published at his expense. It was in pamphlet form, published in 1883, and entitled "The Old Swimmin' Hole and 'Leven More Poems." These were poems that had been contributed to the Indianapolis *Journal* by Benjamin F. Johnson. The first had appeared in June 1882. Mr. Johnson, it will be recalled, introduced himself as "from childhood up tel old enough to vote, allus wrote more or less poetry, as many an album in the neighborhood can testify." I wish that Riley had kept Mr. Johnson longer. Richard Henry Stoddard was a competent critic and he was not inclined to view things Midland in too favorable a light, and he praised the Benjamin F. Johnson productions very highly. When Riley's second and more pretentious volume appeared in 1886 (entitled "The Boss Girl and Other Sketches, Stories and Poems") he soon had an established reputation, East as well as West. There is something in a name; and Riley was fortunate in the titles of his volumes, witness such as "An Old Sweetheart of Mine," "The Old Swimmin' Hole," "Green Fields and Running Brooks," and "Poems Here at Home."

No one gave me heartier encouragement when I was planning the Society of Midland Authors than James Whitcomb Riley. If his health had permitted he would have been the first president of the Society. That was the hearty wish of Chatfield-Taylor as it was of the rest of us; but his health would not permit him to take the place, and he was named the first honorary president of the Society.

I met James Whitcomb Riley several times. I found him always very considerate and cordial; and on every occasion and in every particular the gentleman. I found that in dress, language, and bearing he showed that most admirable care that just misses the meticulous.

Once, when a chautauqua brought us together, I told him of exploring, with some Southern friends, the mountains near the line between Georgia and North Carolina and finding a little school in a log house that lacked a door and did not have even greased paper in the two little openings called windows; and that a little elocutionist with us had recited two of his poems, which had pleased very much the pupils. To my great surprise he was deeply affected; he was so thankful that his poems had brought some sunshine into that cove; and he spoke with much feeling of the wide, undreamed-of influence of the author who wrote about the things the multitude could understand. It was plain to me that while Riley was glad because of his fame, that which he prized much more was the regard, often the affection, of his readers, among whom the poor and lowly were by him highly esteemed. It gave me an entirely new idea of James Whitcomb Riley. After he had commented briefly on the occurrence I had narrated, he placed his hand over his eyes, and I withdrew from the room.

I did not tell him — and how thankful I am that I did not

— that the little elocutionist recited "Orphan Annie" also and that the second time she said, most skillfully, "Or the goblins will get you," every pupil dashed from the log hut and scampered into the woods. The teacher said they would hide until late; they would not come back that day.

MARY HARTWELL CATHERWOOD

OF THE authors of the Midland I owe most to Mary Hartwell Catherwood. I did not read any of her earliest pieces, published in a juvenile magazine in the seventies. In fact, the first of her stories that I read with interest was "The Romance of Dollard." It afforded me some hours of recreation when it appeared as a serial in the *Century* in 1889. I can not recall that I read anything more from her pen until I bought shortly after it was published a little book entitled "The Spirit of an Illinois Town," and which contained that which appealed to me far more than the story which gave the book its title. The other story in the book was entitled "The Little Renault." Few things more pathetic have been written. It led me to read "The Story of Tonty" and that started me to read all of Mrs. Catherwood's books and for that I am much in her debt. But I am indebted to her most because under the title of "The Little Renault" she had put a line from Parkman; and that line led me to read Parkman's "LaSalle and the Discovery of the Great West"; and then to read all his books. Up to the time that I read that book of Parkman's I had read a great deal; but it had not been well balanced. Its great lack was history. I found Parkman so interesting — far more interesting than any fiction could be to me at that time or later — that I read his books to the exclusion of almost all others until I had finished them. Some of them I have read twice since; and some parts of them I have read oftener than that.

Mrs. Catherwood, born in Ohio, lived in Hoopeston, Illinois, from 1888 until 1900, when she came to Chicago to make her residence with her nephew, who earlier had been her amanuensis and close companion, Robert Catherwood. She had an editorial position on the Chicago *Graphic* from 1890. She was of the West, which by 1890 had been spoken of by some as the Midland.

She was most interested in the romantic phases of the history of the Midland and the lives of the French and Spanish explorers, missionaries, and adventurers who first traversed the stretch from Quebec to New Orleans. Her books reached from Dollard, the hero of early Canada, to "Old Kaskaskia," which is a story of Louisiana life; and in one volume of short stories there are five laid in Ohio, five in Illinois, two in Indiana, and one in Kentucky.

She had one of the kindest faces I have ever seen. She smiled when she met a little child. There had been disappointment and suffering in her life: it sweetened her character. She had a keen sense of humor, although it rarely appears in her books. She was quiet in her speech and ways, and one soon perceived that she was a cultured lady.

The authors I have named — Eggleston, Riley, Rexford, and Catherwood — were not of the South. They did not look to St. Louis. They were of the Midland, looking toward Chicago. There were others — for examples, Gen. Lew Wallace, whose "The Fair God" was published in 1873 and his "Ben Hur: A Tale of the Christ," condemned by the critics and yet read by the people, in 1880; Hamlin Garland, whose "Main Travelled Roads" first appeared in 1890; and Henry B. Fuller, whose "The Chevalier of Pensieri-Vani" was published in 1891.

EUGENE FIELD AND HIS CORNER

One day shortly after Chicago became my home I saw coming toward me on Clark street a man walking in such manner that it seemed his arms and legs, if not his head, would fly off; a man who, I knew later, sometimes walked in a way as bizarre as he always dressed. I spoke to Gene Field — he was the man of the queer gait — and reminded him of a jolly time he and Opie Read had in Quincy in September 1888, and of the five-minute romance he unfolded as the solemn — solemn is the proper word — truth to Add L. Langdon and some others, myself included. Gene immediately proceeded, with a most sepulchral solemnity, to tell me three tales, as the truth without fault or blemish, of his life, and which in due time I found to be, as I anticipated, remarkably free from any element of truth whatever. Yet Gene never prevaricated; he was the last man in the world to tell an untruth when it would have been a lie! In other words, Gene stuck strictly to the truth when it was a matter of real importance. He romanced out of pure and undefiled and harmless mischievousness.

Several times I was a listener in his Saints' and Sinners' Corner in the McClurg bookstore, being there through the kindness of Dr. Frank Gunsaulus.

I first met Dr. Gunsaulus when I went to see him about lecturing to the Quincy High School Alumni Association while I was president of that organization. The immediate result of my call on him was that when I attended his popular Plymouth Congregational Church, as I did soon after I became a resident of Chicago, and was put in a pew well forward, he noticed and recognized me, and a few days later I had a note from him which led me to call on him several times. He was partial to young people, and I was only thirty-three, and was told that I did not look my age.

Gene Field was the High, Exalted, and Most Puissant and Beloved Monkeywrench and Gunsaulus was the Most High, Honorable and Mighty Most Eloquent Orator and Master of Flubdub of the Saints' and Sinners' Corner — at times it was called something else. Everything about it was informal. Gunsaulus was recognized in Chicago as an author in 1893. Not much authorship was required then to be a Chicago author if one cared to walk the "applesauce" route to the favor of literary and society editors, and could manage to wear his spike-tail just once to one of the clubs that were far from being literary except in their names. But Gunsaulus had better grounds than that for being called an author. By 1893 he had seven books to his credit. He wrote as many after 1893. As is the case of almost every American writer, much of his early pen work was with poetry.

Gunsaulus was an orator. Like Bryan, he had A Voice. I have never heard a better voice for public speaking and its possessor was a master in its use. I have never heard any other speaker who could put as much effect in one word as Gunsaulus put into the word *all,* on which he would dwell three times as long as was necessary to utter it. But he had much more than a voice. He was a thinker and a man of wide reading and broad culture. His lectures on Savonarola, John Hampden, and Oliver Cromwell were able productions.

September 3, 1926, the seventy-sixth anniversary of the birth of Eugene Field, I put on the air from a radio station having an audience of a million a Eugene Field memorial program, part of which was a letter from Mrs. Field, of which I will quote this much:

> It is with deep appreciation beyond my poor words to express, that I am writing you. The love Eugene Field personally inspired in all who knew him, is known. The love and appreciation for his writings as he had to leave them so short of what his talents would have made them had not untimely death intervened, seem but to have grown with the years.
>
> During the past few years there have been several events to witness that interest; and love for him and his works does not decrease with time. The most important, perhaps, was the unveiling of the Memorial in Lincoln Park, Chicago. That exquisite work of art! But the most touching and beautiful was his reinterment at Kenilworth, Illinois. Within the Close of the cloister of the Church of the Holy Comforter he lies enshrined, and where all who love and admire him can visit his grave in this beautiful spot.
>
> I like to feel that he is really enshrined in the hearts of children, and through them, the mother-hearts that know him through his works. Motherhood he adored. Children he loved. My greetings to all who will hear you honor him. My love to all that love him as man or author. And in the silence of my heart I will hold the

EUGENE FIELD

MRS. EMILY HUNTINGTON MILLER

When Editor of *The Little Corporal*

(Courtesy *Daily News*, Chicago)

FRANCIS FISHER BROWNE

The Midland's Greatest Critic

WILLIAM RAINEY HARPER

When elected President of the new University of Chicago

memory of love given out to him, that has been and will be my stay as long as life lasts.

Thank you for this evening of September 3rd, nineteen twenty six.

P.S. Tell the people to read his prose more. In this only am I regretful in regard to his writings.

In December 1924, I had the Allied Arts Association give a dinner and program in memory of Eugene Field and Bert Leston Taylor. It proved a truly memorable occasion. At that dinner was read a letter to me from the poet, Charles G. Blanden, living in San Diego. I give the portion that related to Field:

While I was living in Ft. Dodge, Iowa, I sent many contributions to Eugene Field for his column, "Sharps and Flats." Soon after I went to Chicago, in 1890, I was greatly surprised and gratified to receive an invitation to a luncheon given in honor of Edward Everett Hale. Eugene Field, whom I had never seen before, met me at the entrance of the room. When I introduced myself he was most cordial and friendly, grasping my hand in his two and making me feel at home at once, and generously thanking me for the many contributions I had sent him. One could not help loving the man at sight. He took me around and introduced me as if he had known me for years. The luncheon moved and Eugene Field was the center. He had his little joke also. When it came time to eat, the waiter brought in many bottles, all cloaked with napkins. Everyone smiled at the prospect of some good wine, but presto! the wine had been changed into apollonaris water! A roar went up: that is, a roar of laughter. Field looked surprised. He never smiled. All this was many years ago, but I still have a most vivid picture in my mind, first of the venerable guest of honor, and, second, of the delightful host. Certainly Eugene Field was a real man, kindly, generous, lovable. When he died Chicago lost its most beloved writer and I lost the first real friend I met in the city. Peace to his ashes! His fame is secure.

Rev. Gunsaulus was not the only minister of the gospel among the elect of the Saints' and Sinners' Corner. Next to him was Rev. Frank Bristol, author of two books in 1893 and the most popular minister in Chicago after David Swing and Gunsaulus; now a bishop of the Methodist church since 1908.

OTHER MINISTERIAL AUTHORS

OTHER ministers of Chicago were noted as ministers and were also authors at the time I speak of: Hiram W. Thomas, James Vila Blake, and Newell Dwight Hillis. These I heard preach frequently and I read their books, but they did not come into my life. Two others, however, popular ministers and authors, did; one more than the other.

David Swing was thought by many to be the most cultured and literary minister of Chicago. He was a great man. He was simple in his tastes and language. Twice when I accepted his invitation to call I found him in denim, busy among some trees — once in the branches of one of them. We found many subjects mutually interesting. Since I have become more thoughtful I have wondered if his interest was not largely because they were so interesting to me — he was the sort that is in sympathy with and charitable toward those yet young in ideas and enthusiasm. It was frequently said of him that he understood young people. He had an active imagination and was of a poetic temperament, yet his outstanding characteristic was common sense. One of his books I have held fast to for nearly half a century. It is his "Club Essays," recommended to me by Dr. Corbyn when it was published.

Another Chicago minister of commanding talents, whom I came to know well, Jenkin Lloyd Jones, was an author in 1893. He was pastor of All Souls' Church from the time he founded it in 1882 until it was used as the foundation of the Abraham Lincoln Center in 1905, of which he was minister, superintendent, and general director and boss until his death. The first of his books I carried in my "valise" and later "bag," for many years. I yet have the worn, soiled copy. It is "The Faith that Makes Faithful," published in 1886.

He and I became good friends. He loved the country. Once he wrote me, "I am of the unfortunates who work in the city all the rest of the year to be able to live six weeks in the country." He worked on a farm until he was nineteen.

Always he looked the farmer, including the full, long, rather neglected beard. I accused him of dressing like a farmer when he went to the circus. He thought that did the farmer an injustice. I have never known another person with such a mischievous twinkle in his eye. He was the editor of *Unity,* a weekly paper he established in 1878, and we "exchanged." He started as a Unitarian, but that became too restrictive and narrow and he became altogether "independent." His *Unity* was, of course, far removed from orthodoxy. In a letter to him I mentioned that his *Unity* was the only *irreligious* paper I read. That designation amused and pleased him. He referred to it in a sermon when I happened to be one of his congregation.

He was a very busy man. Among other activities, he was the founder and first president of the Chicago Browning Society, and it was in that society that I first met him. I have been an ardent Browningite for more than forty years. But I have never thought that Browning was a god; or that there was a Browning religion; or that Browning's obscurities and involutions are virtues — they are his faults; nor have I ever had any sympathy with those that read into his writings hidden and deep meanings that make necessary a deep, delving, torturing, brainwrecking "study" of Browning. Jones and I did not agree about Browning. We did about farming and the joys of the rural life.

CHAPTER XXIII

CRITICS AND PROFESSORS

WILLIAM MORTON PAYNE

IN WRITING of the authors and others that were of unusual influence in Chicago during my residence in that city I have two objects in view: I wish to give some idea of the literary and artistic conditions in Chicago and the Midland, for certainly the growth of the Midland literature and artistic effort, strikingly interesting in itself, is something of which one may well be informed; and, second, I wish to give credit to those who influenced my life and character, who had some part in molding my tastes and in determining the activities I thought most worth while. One may exert the influence named without ever meeting the person influenced.

I think William Morton Payne had a few warm friends; very devoted friends. I think he had only a few friends and did not wish more. When I met him he was courteous, but I felt a rather cold atmosphere.

In the nineties he was considered by many the best critic in Chicago, if not in the West; and I heard it maintained that he was the only literary critic in Chicago worthy of the name. As to this I could not say; for I have never yet been able to determine to my satisfaction just what or why is a literary critic. I accepted the popular opinion of him and therefore was influenced more or less by what he wrote, some of which I had read while he was literary editor of the Chicago *Evening Journal,* from 1884 to 1892; and particularly after he became associate editor of *The Dial* about the time I went to Chicago to live. He held that position for a quarter of a century. Nowadays the term "highbrow" would be applied to him; and incorrectly. He knew that he was a good judge of literary production; but he was a modest man, and the reputation he had was because he was of the aloof sort, who are generally warm hearted. At any rate, it is safe to say that no critic had a greater influence on literary taste and production in the Midland than he.

Searching for a lost article recently I found a greeting to William Morton Payne from the members of the Society of Midland Authors, assembled at a luncheon. Each wrote and signed a short, special friendly message. Every one of them loved him. The greeting was entrusted to me to be delivered to him at the hospital where he was lying very ill. The nurse said his condition was such that nothing should disturb him. But I was so sure that the evidence that his friends, nearly all fellow members of The Little Room, loved him dearly and followed his illness with sympathy and solicitude, would do him more good than drugs, that I was persistent, and used my lame and halting tongue with such bravery unto recklessness that the greeting was delivered to him. He could not read it, but it was read to him; and then he was so pathetically insistent that I be permitted to come to him that his desire was granted. I stayed less than three minutes; and the poor fellow did not have all the time he wished to express his great thankfulness. He asked me to put the sheet of paper in a drawer in his room; then — he prized it so much — he asked me to keep it safe for him. The hospital people told me that the letter did him good, that he was more cheerful and hopeful and was stronger for days.

I had more than one object in writing about that greeting. I know only too well what it is to be sick among strangers; and what it is to lie for weeks in a hospital. It is best that some sick people be let alone. The others should be oftener visited by their friends. A friendly interest manifested is generally better than any drug.

The very opposite of Payne in manner, because of disposition is

ELIA W. (MRS. ROBERT) PEATTIE

who for twenty years was literary editor of the Chicago *Tribune*. She was recognized as one of the most discriminating, acute, and liberal literary critics of the country. In addition to her work on the *Tribune,* she wrote five serials for the *Youth's Companion,* weekly letters for the New York *Post* and the Boston *Transcript,* and a monthly letter for *The Reader*. It seemed to me that wherever I turned, I found some of the helpful literary criticism of Mrs. Peattie.

Both she and Payne wrote successful books — she twenty, some of which were " best sellers "; and he a dozen.

I am safe in saying that among all the Chicago authors to this day, none has had more warm friends than Elia W. Peattie. She has carried her generous, helpful, sympathetic nature to this day. Its friendliness has grown with the years. Her home has been for some years in the mountain town of Tryon, North Carolina, " unique," she wrote me not long ago, " among villages anywhere in this country." She has just such a home as one who knows her artistic, poetic nature would guess that she would have. It is beautiful in every way. She loves the mountains that surround her; and one of her most beautiful poems is entitled, " My Mountains," and the last line of each stanza is, " These be the mountains that comfort me."

The last time Mrs. Peattie was in Chicago I had the pleasure of meeting her at the home of Amarillus Hammar, the remarkable woman who has traveled everywhere and who is the founder of The Poetry Lovers of America, which has had such a successful existence of ten years. Those two women made the evening a rare treat.

FRANCIS FISHER BROWNE

If I were called on to name the critic in whose judgment I put most faith I fear I would be compelled to name Francis Fisher Browne, notwithstanding my great admiration for Mrs. Peattie and Will Morton Payne. Everybody interested in Midland literature read Browne, and many knew him. He did not go out of his way to make friends, but if you were intelligently interested in literature he was your friend; at least, he thought that was sufficient reason why he should be. I met him rather frequently and found him affable, although some said he was the opposite; and I found him disposed, except on rare occasions, to talk little, and that about everything except books and authors. On rare occasions he would talk almost brilliantly about authors and literature.

He was a pioneer in more ways than one. A soldier of the war between the states and a graduate of the University of Michigan, he came to Chicago in 1867, and two years later bought an interest in the *Western Monthly,* a periodical supposed to be literary, and less than a year old, and changed the name to the *Lakeside Monthly.* Just think of that! An honest-to-goodness, high standard literary periodical in Chicago in 1869! It was one of the victims of the fire of 1871 and the panic two years later and it succumbed in 1874; but not until it had wrought a mighty, though apparently limited, work in the Midland — perhaps least of all in Chicago — in creating a taste for the very best of the written word. From 1874 until 1880 Browne was at different times a special editorial writer on several of the Chicago dailies and for a part of the time he was literary editor of the *Alliance.* When, in May 1880, the publishing firm of Jansen, McClurg & Co. established *The Dial,* a critical literary monthly, he was selected to be its editor and he held that position until his death in May 1913, having purchased *The Dial* in 1892 and become its publisher as well as editor. It will be said by some whose judgment commands respect that *The Dial* under his editorship was the greatest literary and critical periodical in the history of this country. Those who met the thoughtful people of Europe in the late 1880's and after found that among these people all knew of two institutions and persons of Chicago: *The Dial* and Francis Fisher Browne and Hull House and Jane Addams — two institutions and persons wide apart, yet appealing alike to those who made up the saving element of the mass. *The Dial* under Browne — and his son, to whom he passed it on — was always independent, fearless, judicious, untrammelled, merciless to the pretender and literary fourflusher, yet sympathetic and appreciative when the modest and honest and thoughtful was under consideration. Browne was chairman of the Congress of Authors held in connection with the World's Columbian Exposition. He did much; and much the greatest he did was to give to the world the periodical named *The Dial.*

HARRIET MONROE

Harriet Monroe has been and is the leading destructive critic of the Midland — destructive of much which merited only destruction; and she has been a fruitful constructive critic, and, sad to say, some of the things she has helped to build would better never have been aided. She is a poet; but her greatest work has been as a critic — that includes her editorial work. I have for her the greatest admiration and respect; and I am well aware that for my judgment of poetry, at least, she has only contempt; that she considers me "hopeless" in my liking for Victorian literature (of course I do not like all of it) and for the poetry of Whittier and Longfellow.

Miss Monroe wrote the words for the cantata sung at the opening of the Auditorium in 1891. Her first volume, "Valeria and Other Poems," was published in 1892. At the dedication of the buildings of the World's Columbian Exposition, October 21, 1892, Mrs. C. LeMoyne, of New

York, read selections from Miss Monroe's "Dedicatory Ode." The New York *World* published the ode before this date and as a result Miss Monroe recovered five thousand dollars damages from that enterprising newspaper. She is the author of two volumes of poetry, a volume of plays in verse, and "Poets and Their Art" (challenging prose essays). She is doubtless best known as the founder and editor of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse,* which has done more to corrupt those that might have been poets than anything else in all this world infested with would-be poets that think it is literary fame to become notorious by oddity. Nevertheless, much is owing to the editor of *Poetry*. That magazine has smashed a lot of cramping, hindering conventions and has been beautifully destructive of lifeless mannerisms and forms. Miss Monroe may write that which is far from having your approval, but she always says something and when you have read any of her pieces you are aware that she has brains and convictions and that your time has been well spent. She is of crusader stuff; and if she had lived five hundred years sooner she would have arrayed herself in white armor, mounted a white ass, and with a mammoth white steel imitation of a quill pen rampant and an ink well couchant she would have led a fanatical band to burn, to the music of cries of "Damn Rhyme!" all the silly stuff ever perpetrated according to form and convention by poets up to that date. No matter how much you may differ with her, you are sure to respect Miss Monroe and you will soon have, also, the symptoms of a pure literary love.

OTHER NOTABLE AUTHORS

HAMLIN GARLAND, just and merciless and constructive critic of men and institutions, returned home to the West in 1893 and made his residence in Chicago for some years. He never should have emigrated to the East.

Hamlin Garland has written best when he wrote of the West or with the West in his heart. He is of the West, no matter where he may live. I am bold to say that I think no one else has so well written of certain Midland people. Fifty years from now his "Trail Makers" and "Daughter of the Middle Border" and "Son of the Middle Border" and other books about the early inhabitants of the then West and their lives will be popular. And his "A Pioneer Mother" — never a more manly and tender tribute to a mother than that!

There were other Chicago critics from whom I received literary guidance and other Chicago authors whose books I enjoyed. My home was always on the South Side, nearly all the time very near to the University, and in the nineties and later I was often thrown in contact with the authors connected with the University. William Rainey Harper, who was known to the large majority of Chicagoans only as the man who had induced Rockefeller to put up a big lot of money for buildings and to pay for some professors, gathered around him a dozen men remarkable for ability as authors and even more as critics — critics of things other than books as well as of books. The first time I met President Harper was in a meeting of a dozen to discuss ways and means of improving the city government as it was manifest in the ward in which the University is located. The mouth — a straight line during that meeting when he was not speaking — the eyes and the chin — not greatly protruding, but certainly not of the retreating sort — all proclaimed the man of opinions who was not afraid to maintain them.

Of the professors of the new University whom I met occasionally in different assemblages during the dozen years after I took up my residence in Chicago, I mention first Henry B. Fuller, whose "The Cliff Dwellers" (which appeared in 1893) is a deeply penetrating and acutely critical analysis of city life. His first book, "The Chevalier of Pensieri-Vani," bore the nom de plume of Stanton Page. It received little attention until Professor Norton sent a copy, as a Christmas present, to James Russell Lowell. Lowell liked the book immensely; he pronounced it "a precious book": and on account of his praise it was enlarged and republished in 1892. Fuller did not find himself until he wrote "The Cliff Dwellers." His "Under the Sky-Lights" is another brilliant example of the benevolent scalpel on city life. He was the author of a dozen volumes. He died in July 1929.

In the fall of 1893, Robert Herrick began as an instructor in rhetoric in the new University of Chicago. Stories by him had been published in 1892 in *Scribner's* and the *Atlantic*. In 1908 appeared "Together," supposed to be just awful! But the shocked people who had drunk at the fountain of Salmacis bought the book eagerly, as did the sinful and depraved — all those not of the reformer and very good brand who read the book must be sinful and depraved! It was the last ingredient in the full making of Robert Herrick's reputation as an author, and he has not suffered from that reputation to this day. Nor has his pen been idle. Eight of his books had been published before "Together"; among them "Their Child," "The Common Lot," and "The Memoirs of An American Citizen." Eleven books are to his credit since "Together" appeared. My last word of him was a courteous note from Palma de Mallorca, Islasa Baleares.

Others of the University professors in 1893 were Robert Morss Lovett, who became an instructor at the new University of Chicago in 1893. He has served as editor of *The Dial* and *The New Republic*. He is a man of original ideas and course of action, a deep thinker, practically interested in social and economic conditions. His books deserve their high reputation.

Ferdinand Schevill is another who joined the faculty of the new University of Chicago. He came to it in 1892 and has remained ever since, being professor of modern history since 1909. His first book, an able work, appeared in 1899. His pen has been active in noteworthy work ever since. Paul Shorey, already an author, joined the faculty of the new University in 1892 as professor of Greek and he has been head of that department of the university since 1896. Yet another author to join the faculty of the University of Chicago in 1892 was Richard Green Moulton, who came to the new university as professor of literature in English and was head of the department of general literature from 1901 until 1920; then professor emeritus until his death in 1924. He wrote a dozen books and edited more than thirty. He was a profound, critical, analytic student of Shakespeare and his later books dealing with Shakespeare are of the greatest value. William Vaughan Moody, after being an assistant in English in Harvard, joined the faculty of the University of Chicago in 1895. "The Great Divide," one of his plays, was an unusual success and he was offered $50,000 for it in the form of a novel. He refused.

Of all the Chicago authors of 1893, none had higher standing than William Cleaver Wilkinson. In that year he joined the faculty of the University of Chicago as Professor of Poetry and Criticism and he so remained until his death, April 5, 1920. He was the author of a very long list of books. I had studied, with my sister Edith, his "Preparatory, College and Classical Courses," nearly altogether in connection with the chautauqua study courses. He was for years a counselor of the Chautauqua Literary and Scientific Circle. When I went to Chicago I had Dr. Wilkinson on a high pedestal, which I never lowered, but raised. I desired very much to meet him and that desire was gratified on several occasions during the first few years of my residence in Chicago. Few men have done more good for the youth of the United States than he has; and he would have done more had his health permitted. I yet treasure his Courses in book form. They first permitted me to drink at the classical fountain. They helped as much as any books could to remedy the lack of a college education. Hundreds of thousands are similarly indebted to him.

CHANGED CHICAGO

What I have written about critics, ministers, and professors is the best evidence I could submit to prove the change that had come in the intellectual and literary life of Chicago. I have not mentioned all of the ministers and professors worthy to be brought forward as evidence.

In the nineties Chicago had better preachers; more deeply thoughtful, bolder in purpose, and better orators, than any other city in the United States. New York was a bad second. That city and its friends may be inclined to doubt that now, even to dispute it; but the New Yorkers freely admitted it in the nineties, and many of them went to church when they were so fortunate as to be in Chicago on Sunday although they probably never went to church when at home. Other cities had one or two or possibly three outstanding ministers: Chicago had ten.

There was revolution, a real revolt, in Chicago in the nineties. The preachers started it. Gunsaulus actually talked in favor of the Fine Arts as a municipal asset; or if he did not view them in just that way, he did say that they were things of substantial value, of real value, of great value in life; and that Chicago was big enough and rich enough to have art. Jenkin Lloyd Jones preached from the pulpit the same thesis. So did Swing and Hillis and Blake and Bristol and Thomas. So did other of the ministers. And of course these men continually preached the spiritual life and advocated the things of the spirit as opposed to the gross, sordid life that was rich in money and stocks and big houses and was concerned with only material things. In my ears this moment are ringing some of the things I heard Jones and Blake and Swing thunder forth. Give credit to the preachers of Chicago! They had much of the dauntless spirit of the settler preachers. All about them the city reeked with the grossest materialism; they saw, they thought, they prayed, and they were not afraid.

William Rainey Harper — what a treat it was to hear him talk! — was a man of wide, wide vision; of far, far vision. He saw more than buildings and a faculty and students. He saw far beyond them. He grasped what a great university could be. The University of Chicago taught many — facts. It taught many — to say what they thought. But its potency and effect were much more than that. It was a subtle, silent, pervasive influence and power that permeated every ward and every voting precinct in the city.

If Chicago had the wisdom of some cities of centuries past it would make monuments of the most enduring stones or metal it could find, and on them write the names of the ministers of the city and the faculty of the University in the nineties. It would do something that would let the world know that it thought, that it knew about these men, and that they had accomplished something. But that is not the way of cities in these sodden centuries of glorious invention and deep digging into the wealth of the earth to give men so much of the material to use that with the digging and the using there is no time to think or to contemplate beauty.

CHAPTER XXIV

SOME AUTHORS I MET IN CHICAGO

OPIE READ

OPIE READ came to Chicago in 1887. The next year was published his first book, "Lew Gansett." "A Kentucky Colonel" appeared in 1889 and that made his reputation secure. "Emmett Bonlore" was published in 1891 and "A Tennessee Judge" in 1893. By that time Opie Read was recognized as not only one of the best humorists of the West, but as one of its prominent novelists. His pen has been productive and more than a score of his books have been published. On the side Opie delivered for more than twenty years a hundred or so lectures each year. Yet he was one of the faithful members of the Press Club of Chicago. We lesser fry would edge up to the group of which he was always the center, and would marvel at his memory, his wide reading, and his mixture of wit and philosophy while we roared every few minutes at one of his stories. For more than twenty years ending in October of 1927 we lived less than a block apart. The last two years and a half of this period the doors to our apartments were less than four feet apart. But we didn't bother each other a great deal — people in large cities have no time to live because it takes all their time to make a living. The Allied Arts Association wished to have Mr. Read as its guest of honor at a dinner; and I concluded it would be best to write him, although almost every day, looking from my sun-parlor, I could see him hammering away on his typewriter in his sun-parlor, a few feet away. I received in reply to my letter this telegram:

CHICAGO ILL XXX 1007 FEB L6 L926
JOHN M STAHL
1527 EAST 60 ST CHICAGO ILL

YOU HONOR ME HAVE WRITTEN
OPIE READ
IOIOA

The next day I received through the mail this letter:

OPIE READ
1529 EAST 60TH STREET
CHICAGO

February 16, 1926.

My Dear Bre'r Stahl:

By Saint Joan of Arc-ansaw, you proud me! But list: on the 27th of this month, with a golf migration, I go to Florida to be gone until the middle of March. If you can get the time for encloaking me with your honoring mantle after the 16th of next month, have at ye. It is gracious of you; and surely I shall enjoy an evening with the Allied Arts, a society which we all of us hold in high esteem.

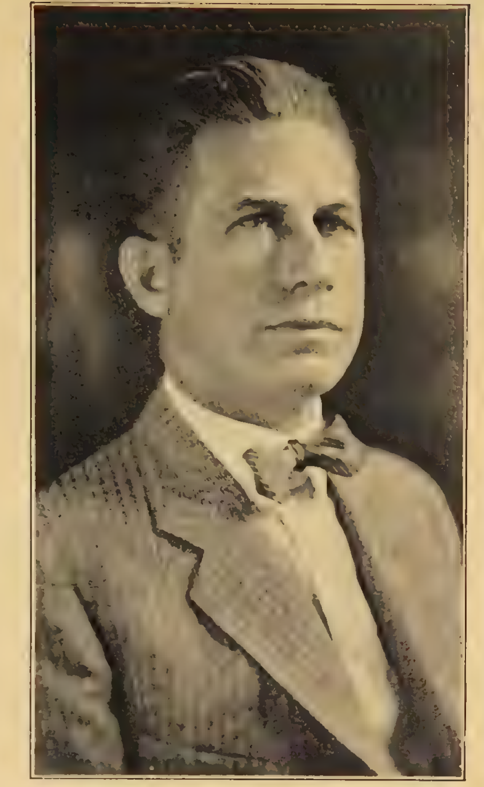
Yours
OPIE READ

The A. A. A. did have him for its guest of honor at a dinner and his friends spoke so from their hearts that Opie replied with difficulty.

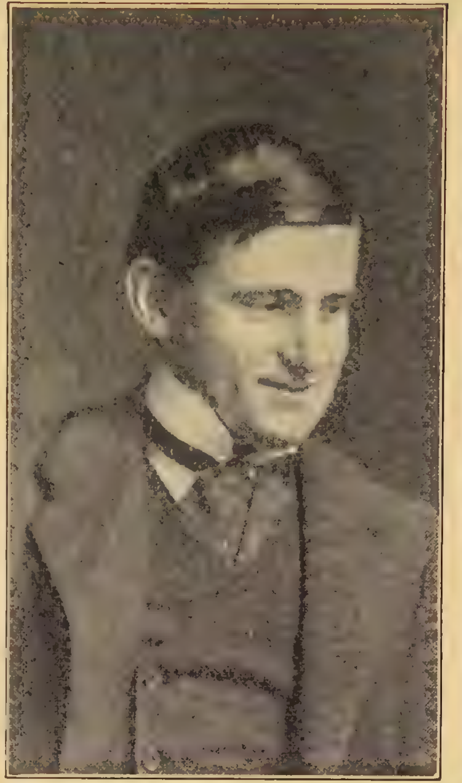
In his last book, "The Gold Gauze Veil," Mr. Read makes one of his characters a girl from Davenport afterward known as Octave Thanet; a friendly salute, I think, to this Octave Thanet, now brave in bodily affliction.

Our Florida habitations are only thirty-eight miles apart and we visit each other oftener than when only a wall separated our apartments.

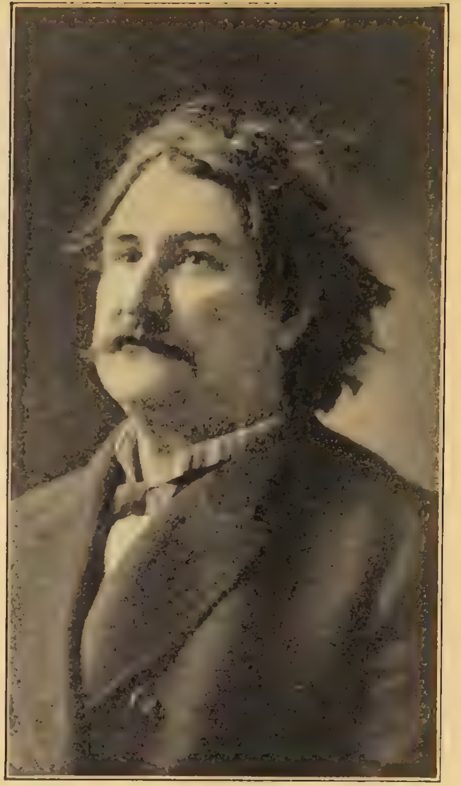
Opie Read has "personality." One would know at once that he was not as most other men. Of magnificent physique, with a head that suggests the adjective *leonine,* a benevolent expression, and truly wonderful eyes — no words could express so much of humor, good nature, and hatred of insincerity as they do in a glance — it is not strange that he com-



JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD



WALLACE BRUCE AMSBARY



OPIE READ

As he was about the time the author first met him, in 1890

mands attention. He is the best raconteur on the platform that I have ever heard.

GEORGE ADE

ONE big reason why I read the Chicago *Record* in the nineties was George Ade. In 1890 he took a position as reporter on the Chicago *News,* but soon went on the Chicago *Record,* where he remained until 1900. What he wrote about Artie and Pink Marsh and Doc Horne in the *Record* caused me to buy that paper regularly.

Ade's home is on a farm near Brook, Indiana, but George is not a great homebody.

At one of the early dinners of the Society of Midland Authors, at which the speakers were George Ade and Randall Parrish, President Chatfield-Taylor kindly called on me to say a few words. The intelligent reporter of the Chicago City Press Association did not mention me at all, did not report anything Ade said, and attributed my remarks to Ade. Which was tough on him.

CAPT. JACK CRAWFORD

JOHN WALLACE CRAWFORD, generally known as Capt. Jack Crawford, was often introduced as "The Poet Scout." Once, with me as the only auditor, he delivered a ten-minute lecture on euphony, suggested by my inquiry if it would not be better to call him the scout poet, and emphasizing that he was a scout before he was a poet.

I once heard him say that of all large cities he felt comfortable only in Chicago. He may have said that of other cities when visiting them, but I doubt it, for while he was of the affable sort, he was honest spoken. I think he found comfort in Chicago because of the Press Club. After he took up his residence in Michigan he was a not infrequent visitor to the city in which he could make himself comfortable and he did not object to his inclusion in the list of Authors of Chicago and Vicinity.

He was born in 1847, on March 4th, and I have heard him say that he and the Presidents of the U. S. had an anniversary to celebrate, but some way a President had never suggested that they celebrate together. He was born in County Donegal, Ireland, and when I went to that county to look up the Meloys I found people who knew of the writings of John Wallace Crawford, son of the county, and were proud of him. My right hand hurt for two hours after I told him that. I can not think of Capt. Jack Crawford being born outside of Ireland; in fact, that would have been impossible. Brought to this country when a boy and very poor, he had no opportunity for an education. After much difficulty, on account of his youth, he succeeded in enlisting in a Pennsylvania regiment in the war between the states and was so severely wounded that he never lost all the effects of his wound. In the hospital Sisters of Charity taught him to read and write. He served under General Crook in the Sitting Bull campaign and as chief of scouts in campaigns against the Apaches. He left the army in 1886 and turned miner and ranchman. For years before his death February 27, 1917, he made his headquarters in Brooklyn and spent nearly all his time on the platform, reciting his poems and telling weird, hair-raising, witty stories. He was a great platform attraction.

I will remember him always, as a tallish, dignified man of striking appearance; curling hair reaching down on his shoulders, long mustache, and an ample "imperial." He was big hearted, courteous, and showed his military training and experience. For some years his home was in Onekama, Michigan, and it was in these years that he was most often in Chicago.

EMILY HUNTINGTON MILLER

I THINK that I have never had for any other author such affection as I had for Emily Huntington Miller; and that affection was all of thirty years old when I first met her!

I have written of *The Little Corporal,* for which the Stahl family subscribed in 1867 and were regular subscribers as long as it was published. I have yet to mention it to one of its readers who has not been as enthusiastic about it as I am, or nearly so. Now to us the most attractive feature of *The Little Corporal* were the contributions of Emily Huntington Miller. How impatiently we awaited the appearance of each number to know " What Tommy Did " the previous month as recorded by her. What Tommy Did was always the extreme of original, except that every other normal boy of his age has done or is doing What Tommy Did. Generally the evening of the day on which a new number of *The Little Corporal* had been received saw a circle of children around the little mother, while she, with her face and *The Little Corporal* close to the lard lamp, read " What Tommy Did " and then about " A Year at Riverside Farm "; and then there was " The Bear's Den! "

Emily Huntington was born in Brooklyn, Connecticut, November 22, 1833, and died November 2, 1913. A long life crammed full of good works! Thousands of children were not ashamed of their tears when they learned of her death although they were in the forties and fifties when she died. She graduated from Oberlin College in 1857. In 1860 she married John E. Miller, brother of Lewis Miller, who, with John H. Vincent, founded the Chautauqua. In 1867 the firm of Miller & Sewall, the Miller of the firm being her husband, began the publication in Chicago of *The Little Corporal* and her home was in Chicago and Evanston from 1867 until the late seventies. For a short time she was associate editor of *The Little Corporal;* then editor-in-chief as long as it was published.

She began writing in her teens. For *Our Young Folks* she wrote a set of twelve songs of the seasons which Theodore Thomas set to music. Some of her poems have been and are as familiar to the people of England as to those of this country, and are well known in a dozen foreign lands. Once a French boy, to demonstrate to me that he was an

English scholar, recited for me "Hang up The Baby's Stocking." He did quite well; but "My Good-for-Nothing" floored him at the very beginning. What an idiotic language we had, he declared. Once, in a railway compartment in Scotland, I heard a little girl amuse herself by repeating the "Song of the Blue Bird."

WILL CARLETON

WILL CARLETON was claimed by Chicago because of his newspaper work in that city from the fall of 1869 to the spring of 1870! But that was long enough to awaken in him a great liking for the city and especially its Press Club, which I am sure he visited whenever he came to the city. Like most of the rest of us, he had to make his financial way. His verse appeared in the Detroit *Tribune* as early as 1861. He once said to me that if he ever got any pay for that verse it was too small to mention; and that doubtless the pay was equal to the value. He graduated from Hillsdale College in 1869, and at the public graduating exercises he delivered a poem, "Rifts in the Clouds," that gained much favorable comment. He did newspaper and magazine work in Hillsdale, Chicago, Detroit, Boston, and New York. The great popularity of his poem, "Betsy and I Are Out," published in the Toledo *Blade* in 1871, decided him to leave journalism and give all his time to authorship. His first book, entitled "Poems," was published in 1871 at his own expense. His next book was published in 1873. It was entitled "Farm Ballads," and promptly the ballads became very popular. I think it safe to say that during the next twenty years they were recited fifty thousand times. "Farm Ballads" was followed by fifteen other volumes of poetry.

If there is any credit for it, which I doubt, Will Carleton must be given the credit for helping originate Author's Readings. He did that in 1872, and always he had "crowded houses" as he went over the country and recited "Betsy and I Are Out," "Over the Hills to the Poor

House," and other of his poems. For years his poetry was more "popular" than that of any other American poet. Since it is now all but forgotten — it lingers in the memory of the older generation — let this be said for it: it reached the heart. "Betsy and I Are Out" prevented more domestic difficulty than would have been prevented by a thousand eloquent sermons on domestic infelicity; and "Over the Hills to the Poor House" saved, no doubt, many an old person from that sad journey. Poke fun at Carleton's poems, if you will, O "modern" reader, but I will continue to take down occasionally my sadly worn copy of "Farm Ballads."

I aided Will Carleton (it is eloquent of his character that he was never written of as *Mr.* Carleton) in getting some reading engagements; and being the super-loyal farmer that I was and writing much about the farm in the late seventies and the following twenty years, it came about that we exchanged some short, but more and more friendly, letters. He sent me autographed copies of four of his books, which disappeared in that mysterious way in which so many of the chattels of an old bachelor disappear. A frequent caller at my bachelor quarters in the early nineties was a fervent admirer of Carleton's poetry and as the doors were never locked and friends came and went as they pleased, it is probable — but only a guess. Some people do return books. When I was about to move to Chicago, Miss Rose Kenney, my first teacher in the Quincy High School and one of the best of women that ever lived, left on my doorstep more than a dozen books which she had taken from my library. I knew that they were gone, but did not know who had them. I always knew that if Miss Kenney had any of my books she would return them. I would have been as free to help myself to her books, had I chosen to do so. Only the book that circulates is worthy to be a book; and ever to be praised are the librarians! When we get old and turn more and more to Aristotle and Plato, we think of things to be enjoyed, rather than to be kept; and agreeing with Plato that movement is life and the principle of self-movement is the essence of immortality, I assert that the book that remains on the shelf is twice dead.

Will Carleton was one of the few authors who have considered their clothes. He was a very careful dresser. And he actually waxed his mustache! But he never forgot his lowly origin and that he was born in a log cabin — he was proud of that. When he wrote "Kitchen and parlor and bedroom — they had 'em all in one," he had in mind the cabin in which he was born and spent his early youth. He was a gentleman — and a poet.

STANLEY WATERLOO

STANLEY WATERLOO went to Chicago in 1870 to study law, but soon got into newspaper work, and the Chicago Fire in 1871 sent him to St. Louis. He went to St. Paul in 1884 and started the St. Paul *Day*. He sold out in 1886 and returned to Chicago and during the next seven years did newspaper work. In 1893 he quit journalism to give all his time to literary pursuits. He spent much time at the Chicago Press Club.

His first book, "A Man and a Woman," was published in Chicago in 1892 and received high praise, especially abroad. It was not only a best seller, but the best seller for quite a time, and went through more than twenty American editions and several English editions. Waterloo was one of several Chicago authors whose books sold better in Great Britain than in the United States. Chicago was too ignorant, provincial, and cowardly to give just praise to the work of its authors. In the East the Chicago author was generally regarded with mild contempt and there was as great ignorance of his work as in his home town. British criticism was fair and intelligent and British appreciation was hearty.

Stanley Waterloo wrote nine other successful books. I remember very well some of his forcible remarks shortly after his "The Story of a Strange Career" and "These

Are My Jewels" appeared (both were published in 1902). The critics in this country and particularly in the West (St. Louis was a brilliant exception) were cold toward the books until the warm praise of foreign critics reached the United States.

TWO IRISHMEN

One of the best statues in Chicago is of John Frederick Finerty, who had two books to his credit by 1893. He wrote other books, of which "The People's History of Ireland" deserves especial mention. He edited the *Chicago Citizen* from 1882 until his death in 1908. Before that he had been on the staff of Chicago papers from 1868. He served in the Union army. He labored hard to bring "Ireland out from under the yoke of England." I think I first met him in 1894. I was yet of the age when one is guilty of writing rhyme and I had written fifty-six lines of it about Ireland. This attracted Finerty's attention and he sought successfully to meet me. He had many admirable personal qualities, including all of the Irishman's generosity, heartiness, and faithful friendliness.

At the Press Club of Chicago in the old days I listened to no one with more interest and profit than John McGovern. I am inclined to think that he was the most scholarly of all the Press Club members. He was deep and solid; and, unlike all but a very few of that sort, he was versatile. He was a poet, essayist, novelist, and lecturer; the author of twenty books and co-author of three.

He lectured on Lincoln, Shakespeare, Marie Antoinette, Rousseau, Andrée, Carlyle's French Revolution, and — he coined the title — "The United Brethren, Wilbur and Orville." (My father's brothers and sisters were members of the church of The United Brethren in Christ. The ministers of that church stopped at our house if within miles of it. I would not want to say how many United Brethren in Christ horses I curried when I was a boy. They seemed to be an innumerable host. Once I overheard a bishop of the

United Brethren in Christ and another very prominent member of that church, who lived in Dayton, Ohio, tell my father how worried and perplexed and mortified Bishop Wright was because his sons would not get all the education he wished them to have, and showed no inclination toward the ministry, but had gained the ridicule and pity of those that knew about the boys — they could not be just right mentally — for they spent all their time trying to sail little wooden boats through the air!)

A NOBLE WOMAN

Miss Frances E. Willard was the author of ten books. But her great work was in the cause of Temperance, which, when she first began her work, emphasized voluntary total abstinence. She resigned her positions in the Northwestern University in 1874 to give all her time to temperance work. She was corresponding secretary of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, 1874–78; and in 1879 she was elected president and held that office until her death. In 1882 she became a member of the executive committee of the Prohibition party. In 1883 she founded the World's Woman's Christian Temperance Union and was president of it from 1888 until her death. She was editor-in-chief of *The Union Signal,* the official organ of the W.C.T.U., and the spokesman for all organizations to limit the consumption of intoxicating liquors.

My pen work attracted her attention in 1883. She was sure that with my large audience I could do a great deal of good; that I could give her real help. I did write articles against the saloon — that institution that was 98 percent evil and 100 percent unnecessary. She remembered that when I had the honor of meeting her in 1894. She always mentioned it when we met. Yet a thousand had been more helpful; far more earnest and continuous in their aid. Surely she had a good memory.

Whatever may be a person's opinion of the latest amendment of the much amended Constitution, and particularly the Volstead law, no intelligent, patriotic person will do other than lend his influence to any sensible means or methods to reduce drunkenness. Of two things nothing, so far as I know, can truthfully be said in their favor: War and Drunkenness. Of all things, war is the most criminal and foolish. Yet a nation may be justified in going to war. The saloon was the breeding-place of everything vile, immoral, criminal; it was a dangerous, corrupt influence in politics; and many men and some women spent in it, in a way that brought them only great harm, the money that those dependent on them for support should have had. Yet sometimes a little alcoholic drink is a benefit. I am a great believer in moral suasion. I rejoiced to see during the fifteen years before Prohibition the rapidly growing sentiment, most noticeable among young men, that it was more than foolish to patronize the saloon because, for one thing, spending time in it was opposed to that fine physical condition that was essential to the highest success and greatest happiness. I am skeptical about making people good by law. But it is necessary to have laws to restrain men from a good many foolish and evil things.

If one could not always follow the W.C.T.U. to the uttermost in its opinions or approve all that it tried to do, that which could be approved was a thousand times that which might be condemned; and no one could ever intelligently doubt the awful sincerity of the members of that noble organization, whose hearts were rent by the misery due to the intemperate use of intoxicating beverages. I can not think of any honor that might have been too high or any affection too great for Frances Elizabeth Willard.

CHAPTER XXV

SOME AUTHORS AND CLUBS

THE WHITECHAPEL CLUB

AMONG my interesting contacts in Chicago in the Naughty Nineties were some with certain clubs and with certain persons prominent in them.

I am sure he does not remember it, but the first time I met Hobart Chatfield Chatfield-Taylor was at a meeting of the Whitechapel Club. He was one of its most popular members. Also its candidate for mayor!

The Whitechapel Club, organized in October 1889, and solemnly dedicated to Social Reform, had its meeting place, according to my memory, in Calhoun Place, in the nineties, just to the south of the *Evening Post* building; but I am told that its meeting place was in the rear of 122 South LaSalle Street. The evidence is conflicting. I have yet other locations given as its place of meeting. My evidence may not be very good, for I was not a member of the club and many things have crowded my ability to remember during the past thirty-five years. I do have a distinct remembrance that two of the meetings of the club that I was permitted to attend were held in the open, in an alley. I also remember that at the meetings on which I was permitted to look, the president's desk was a board laid across the head of a barrel; that on this board there were just two things — a big bottle said to contain whiskey and a large glass of the sort termed a tumbler; that when he called the meeting to order the president solemnly poured from the bottle until the tumbler was apparently half full; that he then drank the liquor he had poured; and that only he got any of the contents of the bottle during the meeting.

The members of the Whitechapel Club were the most original, bizarre, harmlessly insane and interesting lot of men that, in the history of the Midland, shocked some and amused all, including themselves. I can never forget the funeral rites of the derelict from San Francisco, member of a suicide club there, every other member of which had killed himself. He was told that he would be elected to membership in the Whitechapel Club if he would solemnly swear to go forthwith after his election and commit suicide. He agreed. He was elected and at once went to his hotel and blew out his brains. His body was burned at midnight on a rude pyre in the lonely, dismal sand dunes of the lake shore of Indiana. Fantastic shapes around the pyre emphasized the grotesque ceremonies and barbaric ritual; the voices rising inharmoniously above the mournful, funereal sound of wind and wave, of skulking beast and fowl.

Among the officers and other prominent members of the Whitechapel Club when I was first admitted to its sacred precincts and which was possibly as early as 1890 were Opie Read (ubiquitous and everywhere more than welcome), Frank W. Reilly, Charles G. Seymour, Dana L. Hubbard, George A. Babbitt (no, not that one), Dr. Hugh Blake Williams, Sidney P. Browne, Slason Thompson, F. F. Thompson, Willard C. Thompson, Wallace Rice, Horace Taylor, and those mentioned elsewhere. On Saturdays one not a member of the club, if provided with the proper credentials by a member, might visit the club rooms, which were certainly unique as to appointments and decorations. Once a month the club had a symposium and members might invite friends for that evening.

HOBART CHATFIELD CHATFIELD-TAYLOR

IN PRINT and public Hobart Chatfield Chatfield-Taylor has accused me of making him the first president of the Society of Midland Authors. It is true that I was the first to suggest him for that high place. Dear George Fitch was loudly for him although George was not much in favor "of names parted in the middle," because he thought this parting was "English, you know."

Chatfield-Taylor was perhaps best known in the earliest nineties because of his connection with the periodical, *America,* established in 1888, and conducted on a plane entirely too high for the Chicago of the period of its existence. Its managing editor was Slason Thompson and the members of its editorial staff were Chatfield-Taylor and Charles H. Dennis, both now high in the list of authors. Chatfield-Taylor wrote more for it than anyone else and I have always understood that he bore the chief share of the financial burden. Whatever the amount, it was a good investment for Chicago and one much needed. Chatfield-Taylor's second book, "An American Peeress," was published in 1893. It goes from the fashionable suburb of Chicago which was his residence to the English countryside. The book was published in both the United States and England, and the English critics were generally complimentary. While they were sure the author had pictured English life correctly, they were sure also that he was lamentably ignorant of life in America!

Few of the authors I have met are as interesting, instructive talkers as Chatfield-Taylor. Not many have traveled as extensively or observed as intelligently and diligently; not many have met as many eminent people—eminent in widely different fields; and he is full of positive opinions which he expresses in language equally positive, spiced with witticisms and kindly irony. He has all that is required of the captain of a football team; but he has a dislike, amounting to positive hatred, I am sure, of physical exertion. His ample face proclaims goodwill and hospitality; and he has enriched his life by having often at his board authors and painters and singers of note. I am sure that not a dozen Americans know as many foreign authors; and he has a wide acquaintance among foreign statesmen.

FREDERICK UPHAM ADAMS

A MEMBER of the Whitechapel Club and reporter for years on Chicago papers was Frederick Upham Adams. He became an author in 1893 and wrote fourteen valuable books that sold well. I became acquainted with him before I moved to Chicago and well acquainted with him in 1896, when he was "literary secretary" of the Democratic National Committee. The Presidential campaign of that year by said committee was *not* noted for its high literary plane. However, not much of the blame for that should be put on Adams. I am careful to state this to relieve him from the weight of the alleged literary part of the Democratic campaign of 1896. We had some hearty laughs about that campaign and our parts in it. In 1896 he started a magazine, *The New Time,* which Wallace Rice said was "a rather wonderful magazine which lasted longer on less money than any in the history of journalism." It had two years of life, of consistently growing weakness.

THE 101 CLUB

THIS club was organized in the winter of 1897–98 by some fifty of the well-known authors and artists of Chicago. They thought the club should have one farmer and I was elected to membership.

The first president was Dr. A. E. Palmer, a most deliberate, gracious presiding officer, as he was a fine specimen of masculine physique. When he told a member to sit down and be quiet he did it in such a way that the member heartily thanked him. He was succeeded by Grace Duffie Boylan, as she will always be to thousands (now Mrs. Louis N. Geldert), author of fourteen successful books, of which the first was published in 1893. She has been president of the League of American Pen Women. She was succeeded by

Pauline Palmer, one of the very best painters of the Midland. It takes half a column in Who's Who to tell of the remarkable things she has done.

For a time I was one of the directors. That led me to become well acquainted with Fernando Jones, another director, and who for forty years was as well known in Chicago as any of its citizens. He discovered the site of the Chicago massacre and led in the movement to have it marked by a monument which nicely reflects Chicago's taste in sculpture at that time. He located the grave (it is in what is now Lincoln Park) of David Kennison, who claimed to be a Revolutionary soldier and the last survivor of the Boston Tea Party. In 1928 someone claimed to have searched some town records in New England and to have found that at the time of the famous tea party Kennison was only thirteen years of age; that he was never in Boston; and that he was not a soldier in the Revolutionary army.

Fernando Jones showed me a bottle containing some stuff, given him by Kennison, who said it was some of the tea of the lot that was thrown overboard, except that kept as souvenirs. If the tea when it reached Boston harbor smelled at all as it did in 1898 the Bostonians could not be blamed for putting it in the bottom of the sea.

In 1835 his father brought Fernando Jones with the rest of his family from New York State — Millard Fillmore was Fernando's first instructor — to Chicago and in that city he lived until his death at the age of 91 in 1911. He mastered several languages, spent eight years intelligently abroad, and was one of the really cultured men of the city. He was a rare raconteur and his best stories were those he claimed were told him by Abraham Lincoln.

At one of the early meetings of the 101 Club Lorado Taft, a charter member, now considered quite a sculptor although he has remained loyal to the Midland, made a long and interesting talk on his student life in Paris. That city was a rather unknown quantity to Chicagoans in those days compared with what is known of that city to Podunk now.

Taft was and is a most interesting talker; and when he made his talk to the 101 Club his student life was not far behind him. He told that when he arrived in Paris he rented a modest room in the Latin Quarter and then went out to see some of the gay city. On his return to his room in the evening he found a beautiful French girl encamped on his doorstep, surrounded by a few pots and pans and some bed clothing and a bundle of her clothing. At this point I noticed a keen interest on the part of Jones, who had kindly invited me to sit beside him — he had taken a liking to me. Lorado proceeded to relate that the beautiful young maiden told him that she had come to live with him; that she knew how to buy to such advantage that if she bought and prepared the food for two it would not cost so much as only his food if he bought it; and she offered him all the comforts and delights of married life in a home; assuring him that what she proposed was the general and proper practice in the Latin Quarter.

Fernando's interest increased.

Lorado said his Western farm ideas of morality forbade his taking advantage of the girl's offer.

Fernando said in a whisper not too low, "You liar."

In all the world I have no friend I prize more highly than Wallace Bruce Amsbary. I first met him in the 101 Club. He was an actor in the years of that club, supporting Marie Wainwright, Nat Goodwin, and Thomas Q. Seabrooke, and I little thought he would be the poet and lecturer he has been for more than twenty years. I think his most entertaining lectures are on "The French-Canadian in Song and Story" and "Jean Bateese and His Brethren," and the others that give him opportunity for his inimitable French-Canadian tales and anecdotes and poems. But of course the lectures he gives before students and other very wise people are on The Folk Lore of Tolstoi, The Humor of Shakespeare, and James Whitcomb Riley and Kipling and Stevenson and William Sidney Porter (O. Henry) and a dozen other interesting authors.

Doubtless his audiences dearest to him are those that have read his "Ballades of Bourbonnais," and even more those that have read his "M'sieu Robin," a collection of the legends, ballads, and lyrics of Jean Baptiste and his friends. This last named volume takes its title from the initial poem, which Bruce read to the Stahls when he had just written it, and we were so enthusiastic in its praise he seemed to think we knew good poetry when we heard it. We certainly did in that case.

I would not want to say that of the members of the 101 Club Opie Read was a better story teller than William Lightfoot Visscher, or vice versa. Visscher was one of the most whimsical, lovable, and pathetic characters I have ever known. He was successful as an actor; more successful as an author — of eight volumes, some poetry, some prose; most successful of all as a platform raconteur and reader. He had one grievous fault: his heart was all kindness and generosity. He was a warm friend of my wife and me as he was a highly valued one. Prized indeed is a copy of his "Poems of the South, and Other Verse," for on the fly-leaf is written in the author's faultless script:

> *For Mary Edith Stahl:* The word of my royal and loyal friend, Leroy T. Goble, is a pleasant law to me that I am delighted to obey. He has told me to send you this book. I hope it may bring you some moments of entertainment. With all good wishes of the season, and all other seasons.
>
> *Cordially*
> W. Lightfoot Visscher

When, in 1926, I arranged a dinner for Mrs. Geldert in Chicago, whimsical, poetical, lovable Charles Eugene Banks, literary editor for many years on Chicago and Seattle papers, charter member of the 101 Club, wrote from Honolulu, which has been his home for years;

> Next to the sainted Amber who was our queen of Bohemia, Grace Duffie Boylan stands highest in the record of good deeds done among her contemporaries during those days when Chicago was big, rawboned, robust, and gloriously natural. Her name is closely linked

with our historical meeting places: Madame Galli's, the 101 Club in Masonic Temple, the old Press Club over Dale's drug store, the later Press Club over Mussey's billiard parlors, and all that gorgeous whirl of the World's Fair in which Grace was ever a central and beautiful personification of good will and good fellowship.

THE PRESS CLUB OF CHICAGO

I WAS a member of the Press Club of Chicago for years and would not take a good farm, farmer that I am, for my memories that cling fast to that club; precious memories of delightful hours in front of the big fireplace in the spacious front room of the club quarters above Mussey's Billiard Parlar or in the "buffet" in the back. That was years before the club became so prosperous that it bought the high building of the University Club, and became a landlord instead of a tenant.

I have heard it claimed for the Press Club of Chicago that it is the oldest press club in the United States. Loyal friends of the club have told me this is not quite true. It was the brain-child of Franc B. Wilkie, its first president. It was organized in 1880 and its first banquet was in the Palmer House, January 15, 1881.

Said Vice-president Fairbanks in 1907 — and everyone that knew him knows that he was of the chunk-of-ice sort:

> No one who has not enjoyed the hospitality of the Press Club of Chicago knows what he has missed. I am deeply sensible of the fact that I have never known Chicago at her best until today; have never known the full source of her strength and the secret of her renown. The Press Club is Chicago incarnate.

Among the author members of the Press Club that come to mind as I write were or are William J. Bryan; John McGovern; Eugene Field; Stanley Waterloo; Opie Read; George Ade; John McCutcheon; Frank Harris; Charles Eugene Banks; Elliott Flower; George Barr McCutcheon; James Whitcomb Riley; Ben King; Nixon Waterman; Ernest McGaffey; George Horton; George F. Butler; William Lightfoot Visscher; Douglas Malloch; Paul Carus;

Capt. Jack Crawford; and William E. Curtis, who traveled everywhere and knew so much and was so modest.

Among its guests have been Presidents McKinley, Taft, Roosevelt, and Wilson; Chief Justice Fuller; more than a hundred governors of states; and almost every actor and singer of note and every foreign notable who has penetrated to the Midland since the club could prattle; which was at a very early age — it has always been audible and vocal. Among its honored guests have also been prize fighters, from Sullivan up or down. Its members have been of all sorts and conditions of men who lived by their pens; and its guests have been of all sorts and conditions of men and women in all sorts and conditions of disorder as regards the dates and hours of their entertainment by the club.

DOUGLAS MALLOCH

In my humble opinion, President Douglas Malloch brought the Press Club of Chicago to its highest estate. Douglas Malloch is one of my friends that I consider in the more than billion dollar class. He is 101 percent Scotch, which means that in one particular, at least, he is the far opposite of what the Scot is supposed to be by the *soi-disant* wits: he is a wise and liberal spender. He is never at a loss for an apt, witty rejoinder or just the story for the occasion. He never forgets a good story; and at any time he can forge a better one. Many of his poems are highly popular and appear on gift cards and are recited in schools by both pupils and teachers from New York to the most securely hidden coves, and are quoted in speeches at Rotary luncheons and funerals and weddings and christenings and paved roads openings and welcomes to lindies and the dedication of sewer systems. Many of his poems will live for a hundred years and longer because they deserve to live, going straight into the heart of the normal human being. He has written ten volumes of poetry. In the volume entitled " Come on Home " is his famous poem, " If I should carve a Lincoln," and another one, " Christmas in Heaven," that, when recited by Malloch, opens the fountain of tears of the most case-hardened audience.

Douglas Malloch is past master of the Writers' Guild of Chicago; honorary member of the Forty Club and a score of other organizations; and for the four years ending in October 1929, was president of the Society of Midland Authors, and a live one, of course. I think he must have started his country-wide career on making people laugh and think — no public speaker mixes more fun and philosophy in a lecture — November 5, 1877. He was born May 5, 1877. Arnold Bennett wrote me: " Douglas Malloch is in all ways an A 1 fellow. Spread this fact broadcast, and greet him admiringly on my behalf." And Sir Gilbert Parker (there's a man who looks the part!) said in a letter to me: " Douglas Malloch is a man who commands the admiration of all. Such men are none too numerous in any country and they do honor to the land to which they belong."

When the usual newspaper obituary appears about Douglas Malloch — " a loving husband, a kind and indulgent father, a model citizen " — it will not be a lie, as it is in so many cases. He is the sort of friend I like — sensible and courageous and steadfast.

AND OTHERS

Leroy Truman Goble, after trying to be a Trappist monk (no one I knew ever needed it more or was less hopeless), devoted his leisure to amateur photography until he won all the prizes and was no longer allowed to exhibit. No more worlds there to conquer, he wrote poetry. It sounded like the real article. It was published, not over his own name; some of it in the magazines. He was one of the early discoverers and lovers of the dunes on the southern tip of Lake Michigan. For a time his fad was book-plates, and on Harry Hansen's page in the Chicago *Daily News* appeared the assertion that " Leroy Truman Goble has the largest collection of foreign book-plates in the United States, and perhaps the largest single private collection of book-plates assembled anywhere."

John U. Higinbotham is a wit. He is a first-class after-dinner speaker. His introduction of President Taft at the luncheon given the President by the Press Club was a gem. The President especially enjoyed John's assertion that while they wished to do everything they could to welcome the President of the United States and salute him in the proper way, they had been forbidden any "booming of Cannon" — Joseph G. was then prominently mentioned as a proper person to step into Taft's shoes and it was supposed that he was quite willing to do so, as Taft was quite unwilling that he or anyone else should. On account of his health Higinbotham has lived in California for some years, editing the local paper which he owns; philosophizing, good-naturedly ironic; writing witty letters to his friends; and also squibs which appear above his initials in "columns" from Frisco to New York City. His books of travel are as readable as any ever written.

Bedford-Jones, again a Michigander, has a long list of books to his credit and he is still going strong. He is a mighty likable fellow.

An old friend has just sent me a copy of *The Scoop,* the official organ of the Press Club. In it I find a column of personal mentions, thus:

> Burton Rascoe now has the job of assistant to Cap. Scott, vice Bob Haight, who is back on the desk butchering copy.

Right below the item about Rascoe is one about Floyd P. Gibbons and there is mention of Claire Briggs and Charles W. Wheeler and others now known to fame. Also, mention of Colonel Kellogg, who had been an instructor at West Point, knew all about apples, and was the most faithful sitterin of the club.

I have another souvenir of the Press Club of Chicago. It is a badge that, pinned proudly to the breast of my best

Prince Albert, proclaimed that I was one of the reception committee when President Taft was the guest of the Club. The opening remark of President Malloch as he welcomed President Taft to the assembled Press Club was: "As one president to another."

Apparently it broke the ice.

To break the ice has generally been the mission of the Press Club of Chicago.

It has always nobly fulfilled its mission.

And there was no question among its members that the high light of its wild career was its entertainment by the Press Club of New York in that city.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE WRITERS' GUILD OF CHICAGO

SOME FRIENDS ORGANIZE

OF THE organizations with which I have been connected, in none other have I found such agreeable companionship or such entertainment and recreation, as in the Writers' Guild of Chicago. The idea of this Guild was born in the fertile brain of Douglas Malloch. He took counsel with Mason Warner and Edward H. Fox. They approved.

They took up the matter with nine others, who lunched each day at "the Kickers' Table" at the Press Club. The chief reason for the selection of the nine, of whom I was one, was that it had been proved that our wives were congenial and good friends and never spoke unkindly of those not present. Fact. Also, that they were good sports and good pals.

It was decided that the requirements for membership in the Writers' Guild of Chicago, as it was voted the club should be called, should be as follows:

The man a good fellow and good sport, who is either a true friend or open enemy, already tried and proved............ 20 points

Such connection with the press as was required to be a member of the Press Club or author of three books or more of merit and of general interest and sale.......................... 5 points

The woman, being the man's wife if he had one, a good fellow and good sport, and never known to talk unkindly about another woman behind her back, or to her face............ 75 points

The officers elected when the Guild was organized were: Master, Mason Warner; First Vidame, R. A. Halley; Second Vidame, W. R. Barnes; Scrivener, L. T. Goble; Bursar, John M. Stahl; Masters of Revels, Douglas Malloch and Edward H. Fox; Stewards of Art, Frederick Ward and Otto Kney.

It was demonstrated at once that the selection of Malloch and Warner was one of the most brilliant achievements in the history of the world. They displayed a devilish ingenuity in devising absolutely original programs for the Guild dinners and meetings.

While the Writers' Guild met frequently at the homes of members — for years it met each Fourth of July at the spacious home of Mason Warner and feasted and reveled on the wide lawn — the first concern of Masters of Revels Malloch and Fox was to have the feast and revels the more often at the most inappropriate place for the assembling of the members of the Guild when normal, for they were then conventionally behaved — perhaps. After an evening at the most out of the way and original Greek or orthodox Jew restaurant or the only Egyptian restaurant in Chicago, we might have our next revelry in the finest dining room of the best hotel. One evening we feasted and made merry in what had been one of the most exclusive and elegant *maisons de joie* of the Midland; and the very next feast was at Hull House. It must not be thought that anything improper was ever tolerated. We might be out for a hilarious time, but we were considered to be ladies and gentlemen. However, often we were youthful for our years. Possibly we were somewhat progressive or very much retrogressive in some of our notions.

Almost the first dinner of the Guild and the first at the residence of a member was at the Stahl residence, which the Masters of Revels announced was The Stahl Farm. There was a good deal of corn and oats and grass and garden vegetable stuff to be seen. The Guilders came in real farmer dress and ate real farmer food (the best in the world) and in farmer style — with some variations; for an example, Wallace Bruce Amsbary was found where he had hidden himself behind a shock of corn, sitting on the floor and working valiantly on an apple pie. Some were mean enough to say that the sweet cider served some of the farmers had been tampered with. This was before a certain man named Volstead was as well and unfavorably known as he is now.

Before the fame of Volstead was, also, the dinner the Stahls had for the Guilders and some other friends — seventy-eight in all; at one long table, with the biggest boar's head to be found at the Union Stock Yards occupying the place of honor in the center of the table; and flanked by roast pigs with, of course, a roasted apple in the mouth of each. There were other eatables. Also something to drink. I was fortunate in receiving from an English friend, not one of the guests, some genuine musty ale from the tight little island. Several of the Guilders were English born and the keg of ale was none too large. The dinner was fashioned somewhat after the old English Christmas dinner, as lovingly described by a number of authors, not all of them English. Gen. Samuel Cecil Stanton, of long residence in Europe and of long military service, tall, erect, gallant, properly arrayed and bedecked, carried in the boar's head; Chouteau Stahl, aged ten, walking before him and singing the carol:

> The boar's head in hand bear I,
> Bedecked with bays and rosemary;
> And I pray you, my masters, be merry,
>   Quot estis in convivio.
>   Caput apri defero,
>   Reddens laudes Domino.
>
> The boar's head, as I understand,
> Is the rarest dish in all this land,
> Which thus bedecked with a gay garland
>   Let us servire cantico.
>   Caput apri —

And when he got that far the applause, whether for the singer or General Stanton or the boar's head I leave you to decide, became so loud and hearty that if Chouteau continued longer what he sang was unheard; for all those at the table arose and, brandishing glasses and mugs and the clay pipes of eighteen inches of length, voiced their alimentary anticipations.

The big event of Warner's administration was the entertainment of the American Press Humorists. Malloch and Edward Guest were prominent members of that organization; humorists, not poets, in 1913.

Warner declined reëlection and I was elected Master. Malloch and Fox also declined reëlection and I wished to appoint their wives — our study of the old guilds revealed that the Master should appoint the Masters of Revels. It was questioned that women could be *masters* of revels or anything else, *masters* being pronounced masculine by all the dictionaries. Realizing the truly awful importance of a right decision of this question, which would doubtless affect the lives of not only millions alive at the time, but of untold billions, I referred it to the mayor of the city, for surely we did not wish to bring the curses of mankind on that city of impeccable fame. Mayor Harrison referred the question to the law department of the city, which rendered a long, exceedingly learned and witty decision, written by Assistant Corporation Counsel Hornstein, that according to the statutes and rules of interpretation, men may embrace women, and so on; and therefore I could legally and properly appoint women to be Masters of Revels — they would boss the revels anyhow.

Desiring the very highest authority to pass on the momentous question, I referred it to the eminent Kent Professor of Law of Yale University. Prof. Taft had been wrong on Canadian reciprocity. He had been President of the United States and while that was no evidence of legal ability or knowledge or of ability or knowledge of any kind, it was really not against him. He had always been known as a wise and learned judge; as governor of the Philippines he had shown marvellous ability in solving the most intricate and delicate problems; and he had certainly been right on parcel post.

In due time I heard from Prof. Taft with a charming letter containing the decision that women could be Masters of Revels.

The papers put big headlines above their reports of Prof. Taft's letter. From it the Chicago *Inter-Ocean* quoted:

> I have your note of October 25, in which you say you would like very much to appoint two women as Masters of Revels. Your constitution certainly seems to authorize such action, and I am glad you have disclosed a proper respect for that authority which in the family is essential to its proper government.

In its account the Chicago *Record-Herald* quoted the preceding sentence in full as it appeared in ex-President Taft's letter by adding the words " and which is not far amiss anywhere."

And then Mesdames Malloch and Fox would not accept the appointment! True to sex.

A NOTABLE DINNER

I WAS much interested from its beginning — in fact, before its beginning — in a Little Theatre founded and managed by Maurice Browne, ably assisted by his wife, generally known as Miss Ellen Van Valkenburgh. This was located in the Fine Arts Building, Chicago. The auditorium of same seated ninety-nine. It was a cozy, comfy, pleasant place. Unfortunately the city, as might be expected, was not interested in Mr. and Mrs. Browne to any extent. The little auditorium was rarely, if ever, filled at a performance, although the plays put on were of a high class and were well acted. I desired to help Browne and wife; all the more when he began to stage Strindberg's plays. I was and am a great admirer of Strindberg. Of course I could enjoy his plays in only the English translations of Edwin Björkman, who is a notable author as well as translator and editor. For some three years past he has been the able literary editor of the Asheville (N. C.) *Times*. When

Browne put on Strindberg's plays I thought he so bravely showed the right judgment that I had the Writers' Guild invite him and his company to be its guests at a dinner, for the papers were kind to the Writers' Guild and the dinner would bring to the Browne playhouse a little of the publicity it needed. Browne accepted the invitation promptly on condition that the Writers' Guild be the guests of his Little Theatre that evening. At the dinner I read a letter from Björkman in which he said:

> Mr. Browne is the first man who has had the courage and insight to make Strindberg part of a theatrical repertoire. And there is another thing I know, too: namely, that artistically Chicago is one of the most hopefully wideawake and active cities in this country today.
>
> You of Chicago have things that we are only just beginning to dream of. There seems to be among you a dozen prosperous and pushing movements toward better art for each one that we of New York may place to our credit.
>
> For that reason it is with pleasure — though not without some envy — that I send my greetings to the members of the Little Theatre and of the Writers' Guild.

I think every statement made by Mr. Björkman was true. I fear that some of them are not now true.

There is a long piece about Maurice Browne in the New York *Times* and other papers the day I write this. His plays and players are having plenty of newspaper notices now in Chicago and elsewhere in the Midland. He has traveled far since the Writers' Guild were his guests in his Little Theatre.

The time of that dinner was, notwithstanding the lack of appreciation of some good authors and artists and their work, a hopeful, fruitful season in Chicago. Three real poets, Sandburg, Sarett, and Dresbach, were yet unknown, but they "were on the way" — Sandburg came to Chicago in 1913, won the Levison prize in 1914, and "Chicago Poems" was published in 1915; Dresbach was in the Panama Canal zone 1911–15, and during those years and later he would wander far, but the boy of Lanark, Illinois, and of the University of Wisconsin, was essentially of Chicago; and Sarett, of the faculty of the University of Illinois, was also essentially of Chicago. I speak of these as examples because they are such good evidence of that which was stirring in Chicago and which was of a new and higher order, producing not only poets, but novelists and essayists — novelists not unworthy to stand beside Garland and the best of the East — and critics such as Llewellyn Jones, who has edited the *Friday Literary Review* of the Chicago *Post* since May 1914.

A REMARKABLE CABLEGRAM

I AM reminded of a dinner when I was Master and Roosevelt was in Brazil hunting a River of Doubt. There was no connection between this dinner of the Writers' Guild and ex-President Roosevelt and most assuredly there was no connection between the Guild and any river or anything else of Doubt — two things never had any connection with the Writers' Guild: Doubt and Decorum. My Masterly Address at the beginning of the Greater Pandemonium that evening referred to the pleasures and glories of Exploration, especially for the purpose of finding hideous surroundings for our love feasts and spills of oratory. Half an hour later came a Western Union messenger, pale, but determined — he is now one of the most honored thugs of Chicago and by engaging in bootlegging with only a small capital, he has, by strict honesty and hard work, amassed a modest fortune of several hundred thousand dollars and his wife is preparing to entertain English authors come to the Midland to lecture. There is more truth in that about the messenger boy and his wife than you might think for. (I'll be sure to get those good fellows, Sir Gilbert Parker and Arnold Bennett, on the list to be entertained.) Returning to the time of the Guild dinner, after a while those at whom the messenger yelled (and he was the largest, huskiest Western Union messenger ever seen), and who were those nearest the door of the banquet hall, heard him and were made aware that he had a cablegram for me. It proved to be from Roosevelt, then miles from the farthest outpost of civilization, but with his usual doitdeadsureness he had got the message to a telegraph station and it had been sent to me — prepaid. My reading of the cablegram made a marked impression. Of course I am a wonderful reader and my reading has frequently made a marked impression, that is, has been responsible for a marked impression — but the particulars are not important. Then the fact that the cablegram was from Theodore Roosevelt and the further fact that it was from Doubtful Brazil and the yet further fact that it was the first news from the explorer for weeks may have had a little to do with the impression made on the Guilders. After an hour or so some of the Guilders managed to think — some few were capable of thought at times during our revels, and also at other times. Thought is always the parent of doubt. Some actually began to doubt the authenticity of that cablegram. The matter has never been settled definitely. It occasioned so much discussion and the authenticity of the cablegram was so stoutly maintained, that some time after its receipt — about two years, is my recollection — Mr. Roosevelt was appealed to and asked to settle the controversy. I have not at hand a copy of his reply, but it was to the effect that the platypus is a most interesting puzzle to others, especially the naturalists, and it appeared that the Guilders were quite natural; the platypus having thick fur, webbed feet, and a long, heavy duck's bill; also, it lived on land or in water, laid eggs, and generally tried to be an animal, bird, and fish simultaneously without making any striking success at any rôle, and from this he inferred it was a Wilson Democrat; and he was glad to hear from the Guilders and to learn that they were interested in scientific exploration and were not nature fakirs or muckrakers. Trusting this answers your question, "which I have read simultaneously with six others and three books, I am, etc."

Of these things I am certain: The cablegram was received as previously stated; somebody has stolen it from the archives of the Writers' Guild; I have never had reason to doubt the good faith of that formidable corporation, the Western Union; and Mr. Roosevelt spoke to me about the cablegram some time after its receipt. In fact, we discussed it. Mr. Roosevelt had remarkably good teeth. This was plain when he laughed. Some of the things that happened during the revels of the Guilders were of such interest, philosophical, ethnological, or sociological, that news of them traveled as far as Long Island. I may know more about that cablegram, but I do not wish to load down this chapter with unnecessary details.

It was the Writers' Guild (the Allied Arts Association participating) which had the dinner in my honor January 17, 1925.

I AM HONORED

THE invitations to the dinner of January 17, which were elaborate and set forth all the pertinent facts about the dinner, were signed by Mary C. Warner and Lutie A. Ward, Masters of Revels!

That was not all. More had come to pass than I had dreamed of when I was Master of the Writers' Guild — on the invitations appeared the name of Mabel Cook Cole as Master of the Writers' Guild!

Truly the women have taken possession. And the men seem to like it. I give a part of each of two nice notices Harry Hansen had in his Book Page in the *News:*

> On Saturday, January 17, in the ball room of the Auditorium Hotel, a testimonial dinner will be given John M. Stahl by the Writers' Guild, of which he is past master. The Writers' Guild will have the cooperation of the Allied Arts Association, of which Mr. Stahl is founder and president. Mr. Stahl was the founder of the Society of Midland Authors and served it three years as president; he has been president of the Drama League of America and of several artistic organizations; he is chairman of the advisory committee of the Friends of American Writers and has been or is an officer of

the Dickens Fellowship, the Poetry Lovers, etc. He is the author of several successful books. Mr. Stahl has for years been the president of the League for Rural Welfare. He was the first to propose rural mail delivery and led the movement that secured it, and also our present parcel-post law. He has been valiantly loyal to the Midland and to Chicago and more especially to its artists; the testimonial dinner to him will be a well-merited tribute to a self-effacing worker for the higher, finer things of life.

Judging by the list of speakers it will probably be in session two or three days. The following will speak:

Fay Cooper Cole
Clara Louise Burnham
Frank V. Dudley
Alice French
Mason Warner
Louise Ayres Garnett
Glenn Ward Dresbach
Anne Higginson Spicer
Charles A. Myall
Lily A. Long

Margaret Hill McCarter
Earl H. Reed
Alice Gerstenberg
Llewellyn Jones
Douglas Malloch
Wallace Bruce Amsbary
Charles Finger
Jay William Hudson
Edwin Balmer
Gen. S. C. Stanton

The dinner is to commemorate Mr. Stahl's efforts on behalf of the fine arts of the middle west. It is actually a sort of Founder's day banquet, for Mr. Stahl is the founder of most every organization that has the word " art " in it. He arrived here when Chicago was a lit'ry waste, without even a woman's club functioning, now look at it — the poet's bread-basket. His first contribution to literature was the rural route, whereby novels were moved direct into the homes of the farmers. Since then he has been constantly active on behalf of poets and novelists, most often those to whom recognition had not yet come. By the way, there will also be musical numbers for the intervals while the speakers catch their breath.

Llewellyn Jones, to whom I owe so much, had a lengthy editorial in his Literary Review department of the *Post*, of which this is a part:

Sherwood Anderson very much regrets that he can not be at the dinner in honor of his old friend, but he has a lecture engagement far away, made three months ago. He has just written Stahl: " You and I have known each other a long, long time — in fact, I would be somewhat timid in saying how long — a little this side the dawn of history, in any event. In fact, as you know, we knew each other long before either of us thought of writing as in any sense an art." Stahl recalls the time when he had Anderson to lunch with him, and Sherwood said, but with defiance and determination in his voice and eyes: "Only the New York Russian Jews read my stuff." Times have changed.

Miss Fanny Butcher, literary editor of the *Tribune,* had an extremely nice notice, top column, next ad — no, beg pardon — next a fine picture of Zona Gale, big headlines.

Not the least gratifying notices of the dinner were those in the "country press," which showed me in a way that was plain that my work for rural people had not been forgotten.

Mrs. Cole (author of interesting books about the Philippines) was the most brilliant toastmaster I have ever heard. I might be accused of being prejudiced — so accused without being blamed, the circumstances considered; but I heard some score of those at the dinner render the same judgment. Her remarks were always just long enough; could not have been more appropriate; and were a perfect combination of wit and sentiment.

I will confess that I was deeply affected, and I know that no one blamed me, for there was so much deep feeling in what the speakers said. I have been at a good many testimonial dinners and all others seem cold and listless compared with the one in the Auditorium ball room January 17, 1925. I knew that I was unworthy of what was said about me, but their faces and voices showed that those that spoke most warmly about me — Mason Warner, Dresbach, Dudley, Clara Louise Burnham, Louise Ayres Garnett, Margaret Hill McCarter, Lily A. Long, Hudson — oh, all of them! — were honest and sincere in their praise. That one night paid me well for all the work and worrying I had done to gain publicity and substantial recognition for authors and artists.

I can not resist the temptation to give the contribution of Edwin Balmer, jolly, brainy, big-hearted Ed. Balmer. Who else could parody the *vers libre* like the following? And right in Chicago at that, under the shadow, as it were, of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse* and Miss Harriet Monroe! Balmer is one of those who are always ready to do what they can to aid authors and literature and the arts in the Midland, where, goodness knows! they need all the aid they get, and much more. This is what Ed. read at my dinner:

O Writers' Guild, O Chicago Association of Commerce!
O the Arts Club, O the Art Institute, O the Auditorium!
O the Union League Club, O the Union Stock Yards!
O Michigan Avenue, O Lake Michigan, O the Drainage Canal!
O Ten Thousand cubic feet of water every second!
Waters flowing, blowing, crowing. O winds wailing, failing, paling!
O music swelling, dwelling, felling; O sculpture solid, stolid, squalid; O Poetry pleasing, squeezing, wheezing!
O Samuel Insull, Ogden Armour, Jane Addams! O Mary Garden, Frederick Stock, Lorado Taft, Harriet Monroe! O Chicago!
O John Stahl!
Abdicating, abnegating, accumulating, actuating, advocating,
Affiliating, alienating, amputating, annotating,
Asphyxiating, I come to extol John Stahl —
Hail!

When he was young, John Stahl decided
To make friends instead of money. So he started
In a small way as did an automobile maker in Detroit,
Not so many years ago.
People found him
Very likeable; friends came to him
In flocks, forcing him to form societies, clubs,
Guilds, associations, circles and fraternities
Merely to keep them happy
And incidentally classified.

At the end of his life, he had to take two memory courses
To recall just his closest friends, and he kept
Seven secretaries busy recording the names of others.
Had he devoted his life to making money, he might have bought
Ten million dinners, but they never would have been
Good for him.
As it was, he never bought a dinner for himself or for
His wife, for he had to eat testimonial meals every night.
So he lived long and died,
The Henry Ford of Friendship.

After that (and the long continued applause) Balmer read a more serious poem, which I greatly treasure, and Charles Myall another which beautifully expressed the warm heart of this poet and playwright.

I was gratified to have a greeting from Ben Greet, then in London. He wrote that it was his forty-fifth year on the stage. Knowing the years of withheld appreciation and the scant income of some authors true to themselves and to life, I thought it exceedingly appropriate that Dreiser wished that " you will live to enjoy many such distinguished meals."

Among others who wrote letters were Alice Hegan and Cale Young Rice, Octave Thanet, who both wired and wrote, Clara Kern Baylis, Marian Dana, Zona Gale, Katharine Holland Brown, Young E. Allison, " The Beckers," and Sherwood Anderson. A sentence from the long letter of Stuart P. Sherman is "One trouble, I am afraid, with you Chicago people is that you have become rather addicted to dining with John M. Stahl, and listening to his taffy."

Elizabeth Sewall Hill wrote a jingle about me, and Herbert Quick a long letter. There were letters from Charles G. Blanden in California and Frank Swinerton in England. Edwin Markham wrote a letter also, and this poem was enclosed, autographed to me. Don't you think I treasure it?

A RIME DEDICATED TO THE WRITERS' GUILD
JANUARY, 1925

THE THREE B'S

Three things must a man possess if his soul would live;
  Three build life's crowning good:
Three things would the all-supplying Father give —
  Bread, Beauty and Brotherhood.

Bread for the body of man, for his belly need,
  Beauty to feed the soul,
And Brotherhood that dream may stand on deed:
  These make the perfect whole.

The longest letter of all was from Padraic Gregory, the Irish poet. Every sentence was weighty, but it is too long to give all of it and it seems to me that to give only a part of it would be an injustice.

That dinner was certainly one of which I might well be proud. There were more than 300 present, and when, for examples, Lily A. Long came the 500 miles from St. Paul and Margaret Hill McCarter the same distance from Topeka, and busy Jay William Hudson left his classes and the book he was just completing and came all the way from Columbia, Missouri, you knew they were your real friends.

How I wish that I could put here more — much more — about the Writers' Guild of Chicago, for the Guilders are my closest friends! And how much I wish that I could put here much more about that dinner to me — the beautiful poems read that night by Dresbach and Myall, the treasured letters written after the dinner by Clara Louise Burnham, Alice Gerstenberg, and others! But "space forbids" — years ago I knew that those two words make the most hateful phrase heard about the things that should go in newspapers and books. I will take space for something from the letter read at the dinner from Blanden, which expresses what I think is the highest compliment that could be paid me. Blanden wrote:

> If any one in Chicago deserves to be feasted for the great services rendered the people at large and those of Chicago in particular, it is John M. Stahl. He is, and long has been, a tireless worker for all that tends to build up the community. And he is the most unselfish man I ever saw. He wants nothing for himself.

And so on. And Herbert Quick wrote of me, "He ought to be celebrated as you intend, because more than anyone I know he has this feeling of kinship to others working in the field of art."

I suppose I was never overburdened with modesty; and I fear that what I had was lost that night.

Anyhow, I very much enjoyed that dinner.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE SOCIETY OF MIDLAND AUTHORS

SMALL POX AND MEASLES

WHILE the Midland was producing two score of admirable authors, clean and sensible and honorable authors of books of merited popularity, another class of people, *soi disant* authors and artists, gained a measure of notoriety in Chicago and brought discredit on not only that city, but on a wider territory. They wrote bizarre prose or poetry and larded it well with filth. They thought that which was not vulgar was puerile. Of all things, they most feared to be "effeminate." The word most in their favor was *guts;* their shibboleth was "sex appeal." They thought notoriety was fame. It brought them the notice they most desired. The "modern" in art was matched by certain productions in Midland literature in grotesqueness and vulgarity. These were the years of Miss Anderson and *The Little Review.* Miss Anderson was young and some said that she was beautiful; she had brains and even more "nerve" — which last was far from being other than highly commendable in the eyes of Chicago; and she had no doubt that she had better literary taste and judgment than any other person in the world at that time. *The Little Review* was comical and amusing and it thought itself most serious and weighty. But this must be put to its credit: it gave such writers as Carl Sandburg, Sherwood Anderson, Llewellyn Jones, Vachel Lindsay, John Cowper Powys, Alfred Kremborg, Ezra Pound, George Burman Foster, and others, authors who had something worth while to say and they learned how to say it well, a chance to have it published. The circulation was so small and of such character it might be better to say that it was printed. Now while what was written by some — not any of those just named — was altogether absurd and fit for only the Bubbly Creek of Midland literature, and while some of that written by those named could be justified, rather excused, only as practice work, *The Little Review* permitted them to find themselves. The best contributions to literature are by those of originality and independence and wise self-assurance; and to the credit of *The Little Review* must be placed the discovery and development of a few of that sort among the Midland authors. If *The Little Review* did not reach the populace, except the few abundantly curious or seeking the greatest possible amusement, it did reach those in this country and even in Great Britain and France who might be groping, but were certainly treading new paths with confident and courageous spirit, and paths that led to truth and beauty in literature.

Let this also be said for *The Little Review* and all included in and with it: it was never so offensive to good taste and literary decency as were other eruptive discharges. Here some would name, as an example, the Dill Pickle Club. That was founded by an alleged bomb-maker for the I. W. W. He was certainly a paper-hanger out of a job; probably because he would not do an honest day's work or an hour of honest work. Emma Goldman was the most forceful person who frequented the Dill Pickle Club. The wife of a noted leader, who fatally failed to swim as long as he did in Lake Michigan, picked her hats out of the garbage boxes in the alley on which the club room was located.

Yet even the Dill Pickles were not the most offensive effluvia from the body pseudo-literary, nor was their conduct the most silly or criminal. A Little Theatre group (not sponsored by the Drama League, of course) of the meticulous South Side put on (at least a part of it) Ben Hecht's "Dregs." This same Hecht and another, now a deservedly honored poet and man, thought they were clever when they shamed W. L. George's lame and timid risqué bantering with the coarsest, most disgusting phrases ever chalked on alley fences or in comfort stations. Ben Reitman, now among the very most sanctimonious and evangelistic of the gentry formerly high hatted and long coated, introduced, to one of the one hundred percent Society and two percent art and literature societies with which the city has always abounded, the aforementioned Emma Goldman, with some pertinent and plain remarks on sex which so embarrassed the other ladies present that they retired as precipitately as ladies could gracefully in those days of long and plentiful skirts and tight-fitting bodices. Now these were naughty; but they were not silly, as was Maxwell Bodenheim smoking a pipe of five feet of length on the principal boulevard of the city and asking the passerby to light it for him; or Miss Anderson, with a wild look and wily interior, parading the corridor of the Fine Arts Building, stridently demanding to know when the Revolution should introduce itself.

COLOSSAL MUNICIPAL SELF-ESTEEM

THE BLAME for the greater faults and for the greater part of the faults in the work of Chicago authors must be put largely, in a few cases altogether, on that city. During the nineties it had gulped down the large chunks of flattery diligently and lavishly thrown to it. Those most industrious at this bestowal of flattery were politicians, office-seekers. Next came the lecturers, a majority of them ministers, who well knew that to get a return engagement it was well to flatter. There were a few British lecturers, esteemed lightly in Great Britain; but because they were British and spoke of knowing Lord this and Lady that, their flattery was all but incredibly effective. The self-esteem of the city, never puny, grew prodigiously.

When the Twentieth Century Dawned on the World, The First Rays Fell on Chicago. So said every true Chicagoan. To him it was inconceivable that the century aforesaid could for a moment have entertained any purpose other than to make its initial, especial, and most profound bow to the People, the Greatest on Earth, who in less time than ever before in the history of mankind had made a city of etc., etc., etc. How could it be otherwise? Nowhere else in the world were there such elegant and rich (there were real oil paintings on the walls, painted in Paris; yes, sir, Paris, and they had been exhibited at the World's Fair, which was the greatest etc., etc., etc., etc.) and exclusive (you had to have the card of some well-known citizen to get in) gambling " joints " and houses of prostitution. No other city in the history of the world had been able to show streets containing so much mud and effluvia. Paris might have her Louvre, Rome her St. Peter's, Berlin her Unter der Linden, Ireland her Blarney Castle, and London her Tower and St. Paul's (these were the things the Chicagoan had seen and knew about if he had made a European tour), but you could set them all down in one corner of the Stock Yards behind the Armour plant and no one would know they were there. And in all Europe with Asia and Africa thrown in there was not another waterway that in the same length of time could produce as much pollution or fling into the air as many tons of gaseous filth and noxious stench. And then — oh, yes, not Bubbly Creek, but the Chicago River was meant — everybody knew about it, no need to mention it; and then it was so happily characteristic of the city; yet it was indeed fortunate that Chicago had the Union Stock Yards, much the largest and filthiest in the world, and Bubbly Creek. Indeed, the true Chicagoan so fully comprehended what his city was and what it would be that he knew the Twentieth Century had Dawned for Chicago, and if its rays hit other portions of the earth's surface it was in the nature of an accident. Anyhow, it didn't matter. Chicago did not need any rays or anything else it did not have and wanted. Nothing could stop it.

Wrote Maj. Moses P. Handy — yes, Moses P. Handy, of all journalists the most cultured, traveled, broad, wise, calm, judicious, moderate, etc. — in *Munsey's Magazine* in 1894:

> Somebody has said that when Chicago makes up her mind to be cultured, and to have a literature of her own, she will simply give the necessary orders, and see that they are filled with neatness and dispatch.
>
> This remark is founded on experience, and fairly reflects the popular estimate of Chicago's ability to do pretty much as she pleases, without regard to traditional methods or to the slower processes of older communities.
>
> In a community of such rapid growth, and such ceaseless industrial bustle, the surprise of the stranger is not that, etc. etc. etc. etc. . . . Neither Boston nor Philadelphia, nor even New York, etc. etc. etc. etc.

When Handy wrote that, the opinions of the average Chicagoan may possibly be imagined, in part at least, and enough to reveal their nature; and the reader will agree with Handy, although not just as he would desire, that the wonder "is not so much that Chicago has neither a school of literature of her own, nor literary genius matching in imposing proportions her genius for business; but that so many men and women have found time to cultivate literature, and to give expression in literary form to so much that is palatable to the reading public."

Major Handy was a true prophet. In 1914 there were one hundred and ninety-three (actual count by the Chamber of Commerce — one of the Stock Yards banks made it one hundred and ninety-two) authors in Chicago and suburbs. The sound of their typewriters, mostly borrowed ones, was to every true Chicagoan proof of the production of Literature.

The production of some two score has survived the vicissitudes of the good taste of the reading public. A few have produced almost or quite as good writing as has been produced in any considerable quantity in the history of this country. Unfortunately the decent authors producing that which might be called literature did not, of course, make the noise needed to give them one tenth of their merited fame abroad. Certainly, because of their nature, they would not be noisy to attract attention; and, further, much sound would have been necessary to overcome the vocal vulgarity of those of the other type. Unfortunately, it was these last named that were widely known in the South and East; it was by them the authors of the Midland were judged. More and more I was of opinion that there was need of an organization of the authors of the Midland.

CERTAIN CAPABLE CRITICS

As Chicago had some authors of merit, and had become the literary capital of the Midland, so, also it had capable critics, far-looking, broad, and cultured, in addition to those I have mentioned in a previous chapter.

Tiffany Blake, good Chicagoan by birth and residence, was literary editor of the Chicago *Evening Post,* 1902–05. In 1905 he became chief editorial writer of that paper. Since 1908 he has been chief editorial writer of the *Tribune,* well serving the nation, for he is fearless and able.

Francis Hackett, good man from Kilkenny, was editorial writer on the *Post,* 1906–09. He was the literary editor of that paper, 1909–11. As Blake had done, he, as literary editor, showed most remarkable and commendable originality, independence, and correctness of judgment, and intelligent sympathy with and appreciation of good writing wherever produced. His survey took in the entire literate globe. While he was literary editor of the *Post,* Floyd Dell, born in that county of the Sucker State made known by John Hay's Pike County Ballads, was his associate; and when he went to New York Dell became literary editor. He held that position most creditably before he, also, went where so many of our competent critics have gone. Shortly after his departure came a worthy successor, Llewellyn Jones, who is yet literary editor of the *Post.*

Both Hackett and Dell are real authors. The Midland

and all our country are proud of them. The Midland owes them several hundred times more credit than they will ever get. As I have said, their gaze went to all parts of the literate earth. They discovered for the Midland the current literature of Russia, Sweden, and Norway, such English authors as George B. Shaw, and the best French authors of the period.

While Dell was literary editor of the *Post* Burton Rascoe (another literatus to drop his first name) came to the Chicago *Tribune* and in due time became literary editor. Hackett and Dell had stirred and Jones was stirring up the literary pool, but Rascoe was even more of a disturbing element. He thought a great deal; in fact, that seemed to be his frequent occupation; as was also to write what he thought, and in exceedingly positive language; and if he shocked some complacent person, he was not displeased. He, too, had a keen eye for authors who had something to write and could write it. I fear that he must answer for some people, including even some school-ma'ams, reading Cabell.

A competent critic indeed is Mrs. Ethel Colson Brazelton, who was associate literary editor 1907–14 and literary editor 1914–17 of the Chicago *Record-Herald,* but who has preferred to write books and especially to lecture. She is the author of "How to Read Poetry"; "How to Write Poetry"; and "Writing and Editing for Women."

Harry Hansen went on the staff of the Chicago *Daily News* in 1914, but did not become literary editor until 1920. Miss Fanny Butcher was on the staff of the *Tribune,* but not as literary editor. Both have been as critics potent influences in the development of Midland literature.

I PONDER A SOCIETY OF MIDLAND AUTHORS

My frequent business trips to New York and Boston and other eastern cities showed me more and more that one real advantage enjoyed by the eastern authors and artists was that they knew one another much better than the western authors knew one another. There were organizations of authors and artists in the East — something of which Chicago could not boast at all. It had three or four *soi disant* clubs of this nature that made some feeble claims, but they were not justified, and Chicago knew it. In the East there were meetings, dinners, luncheons, exhibitions, etc., that brought authors and artists together. The coming and going of foreign authors and artists was responsible for a large share of this. It was rare that a foreign author of note came farther west than Niagara Falls. That is not an overstatement. The books and magazines were published nearly altogether in the East and that brought the authors and publishers, and also the authors among themselves, into frequent contact, as compared with the West. I concluded that the Midland needed an organization of authors, and needed it very much. In four or five states there was an organization of authors but these organizations seemed to be little more than names and a list of officers.

It appeared to me, however, that such organizations might be used in forming an organization to cover all of the vast Midland from the Alleghenies to the Rockies and as far south as the Ohio, if not to the Gulf. I thought about this organization a good deal and concluded that on account of state pride, which was especially pronounced in Indiana, Missouri, Michigan, and Iowa, there would best be a state organization of authors in each state; and that delegates from each of these state organizations should be the active members of a central organization, of which all the other members of the state organizations would be associate members; while each state organization would also select a member of the executive committee, and the president of each state organization would be ex officio a vice president of the large organization.

I had and always will have the most kindly feeling toward St. Louis, but I thought — and I yet think I was right, but am not so sure as I was — that it would be best for the authors of the Midland I had marked out to have the headquarters and annual meeting place of their organization in Chicago. That organization would have, I planned, at least four meetings each year, and three of those meetings could be in cities other than Chicago.

It was plain that to overcome the feeling toward Chicago the most helpful agency would be an organization composed in part of the successful, respected authors of the city, women as well as men; those who used a bath tub and also made use of a laundry. Since my plan contemplated state organizations it was equally plain that the organization to take in the real authors of Chicago must be made statewide and offer membership, under proper conditions, to all the worthy authors of the state. The reputation of Chicago authors made this all the more compulsory.

I CONSULT WARNER AND MALLOCH

I HAD come to have much confidence in the judgment of Mason Warner and Douglas Malloch. I carefully placed before Warner and Malloch some of the things I had been considering. I told as little as I well could of my plan, for I wished their ideas and judgment uninfluenced by anything I might say. We agreed that the first thing to do was to form an organization of the authors of Illinois, in which should predominate those authors who stood for decency and, of course, only those whose work had been recognized as highly meritorious; and, even more important, keep out those that had created the ill feeling toward and contempt of Chicago. The importance of first forming the state organization was so apparent to us that we scarcely discussed the larger organization.

What we agreed on was laid before the next meeting of the Writers' Guild. It was agreed that we would send to certain Illinois authors an invitation to a meeting, luncheon, dinner, and postprandial meeting, to organize the authors of

Illinois, they to form such organization and in such way as they saw fit.

THE AUTHORS ORGANIZE

THE ATTENDANCE at the meeting was gratifying. I made a rather lengthy address, which was well received, and turned the meeting over to the authors. There was informal discussion. At the banquet in the evening the speakers were Douglas Malloch, George Fitch, Harriet Monroe, Lilian Bell, Charles A. Myall and Wallace Rice. Chatfield-Taylor was toastmaster.

That someone should actually feed authors, free, was so remarkable that Wallace Rice arose and announced that he had not believed it until that moment, but he had eaten a good dinner and had not received a slip inviting payment, and now his soul was ready to depart in peace, or words to that effect.

A committee on organization was appointed, which met promptly and selected these officers, who were duly elected:

President, Hobart Chatfield Chatfield-Taylor; secretary, Douglas Malloch; treasurer, John M. Stahl.

At the meeting of the committee on organization Clara Louise Burnham and Emerson Hough, both residents of Chicago for years, met for the first time.

The papers gave generous aid. The Chicago *Tribune* adorned its account of the meeting and banquet with two-column space grouping cartoons of Stahl, Chatfield-Taylor, Malloch, Fitch, Parrish, Rice, Charles G. Blanden, and J. Vila Blake.

A MISTAKE IS MADE

I COULD not attend the meeting of the committee on organization. At that meeting Hamlin Garland, who had not before participated in the work of organization, had my plan modified and I am sure much for the worse. The Society of Midland Authors would have come much nearer to its objectives if it had been organized on the original plan. I have been made aware that the majority are of the same opinion — now.

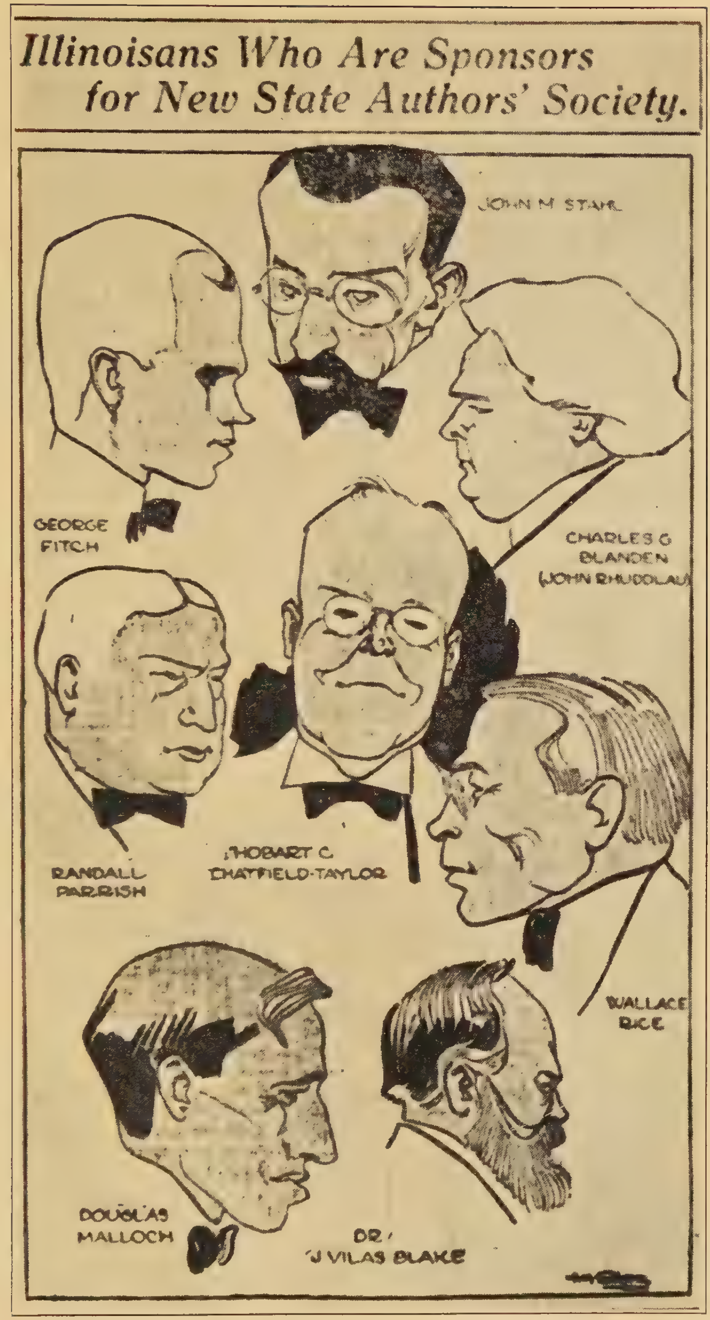
A very cultured literary editor wrote of Hamlin Garland that " it was he who named the Society of Midland Authors and who coined that very useful word Midland." Can a literary editor nod? This one certainly did. "*Aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus.*" As for that word that has been a useful and honorable member of the English vocabulary for centuries and that, when I mentioned it to the 100% American, Emerson Hough, was objected to because it was so English and the authors' society should have an original name, I fear that crediting its invention to Garland made a bad hour in heaven for Michael Drayton (1563–1631) who emphasized the Midland of England in some 30,000 lines of verse about " all the tracts, rivers, mountains, forests, and other parts of this renowned Isle of Great Britain." But long before that the name Midland was applied to the nine English shires. More than forty years ago I heard the word Midland applied to a certain part of the United States by both William T. Harris and Mary N. Murfree. The *Midland Magazine* has been published in Iowa since 1915 and I'll bet that John T. Frederick will make decent oath that he never got that name from Hamlin Garland. I used the word Midland several times in my address to the authors the morning they met to discuss organization.

From the beginning of the discussion of the proposed society of Midland authors I spoke of the Society of Midland Authors. I so wrote about it to Howells and in his reply he said:

> I greet the Society of Midland Authors very heartily, and wish them all success in getting the life of Illinois more and more into letters.

This is dated " New York, Nov. 21, 1914," several days before the meeting and banquet.

The twelve states that make the territory of the S. M. A. are Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota,


Illinoisans Who Are Sponsors for New State Authors' Society.
JOHN M STAHL
GEORGE FITCH
CHARLES G BLANDEN (JOHN RHUDDLAN
RANDALL PARRISH
HOBART C. CHATFIELD-TAYLOR
WALLACE RICE
DOUGLAS MALLOCH
DR. J VILAS BLAKE

Cartoon which appeared in the Chicago *Tribune* of November 29, 1914, in connection with the account of the formation of the Society of Midland Authors

Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

There was certainly material for the membership of such a Society. I have the list of first members; really, the "charter members." They are Clara Louise Burnham, Hobart C. Chatfield-Taylor, James Whitcomb Riley, Edith Wyatt, Emerson Hough, J. U. Higinbotham, Hamlin Garland, Ferdinand Schevill, Mary Hastings Bradley, John M. Stahl, Sigmund Krausz, E. O. Laughlin, Clara Kern Baylis, William Allen White, Mary W. Watts, H. S. Spaulding, Kenneth Sawyer Goodman, Arthur Davidson Ficke, Will Payne, Edna Ferber, Agnes Lee Freer, Harriet Monroe, Walter Taylor Field, Clara E. Laughlin, Allen Ayrault Green, Eben E. Rexford, Edith Huntington Mason, Maurice Browne, Margaret Hill McCarter, Charles G. Blanden, Emilie B. Stapp, Lewis Worthington Smith, Walt Mason, Frederic Hatton, Fanny Locke Hatton, Lilian Bell, Caroline Kirkland, Douglas Malloch, George Ade, Vachel Lindsay, Maude Radford Warren, Howard V. O'Brien, Clarence S. Darrow, Alice Gerstenberg, Lydia Avery Coonley Ward, Willard N. Clute, Zona Gale, Esther M. Clark, Herbert Quick, Katharine Holland Brown, Randall Parrish, and George Burnham Foster. I give the names in the order in which they appear on my books as treasurer. Those elected to membership became members when they accepted election and paid dues.

Other names soon added were Jane Addams, Mary Aldis, Edith M. Armstrong, Cornelia Baker, Edwin Balmer, William E. Barton, Emily Calvin Blake, B. Wade Burleigh, Grace Worrell Burleigh, George F. Butler, S. H. M. Byers, Paul Carus, Ethel Colson, William Chalmers Covert, William Donahey, Mary D. Donahey, Georgene Falkner, Florence Kiper Frank, Alice French, Oliver Marble Gale, Louise Ayres Garnett, Frank Gunsaulus, Joseph Mills Hanson, Edith O. Harrison, James Taft Hatfield, Alice Corbin Henderson, Frances Kinsley Hutchinson, Llewellyn Jones, Hermine T. Kavanagh, Ring W. Lardner, Lily A. Long, William B. McHarg, Edgar Lee Masters, Lena McCauley, George B. McCutcheon, John T. McCutcheon, Samuel Merwin, Anna Morgan, Frances Tregor Montgomery, Meredith Nicholson, Mary Moncure Parker, William Morton Payne, Elmore Elliott Peake, Elia W. Peattie, Walter S. Poague, Earl Reed, Wallace Rice, Walter Dill Scott, Lorado Taft, Bert Leston Taylor, Ridgeley Torrence, Elizabeth Wallace, Henry Kitchell Webster, and Brand Whitlock. By the time the Society was functioning other members had been added: Wallace Bruce Amsbary, Harry F. Atwood, Ethel Fairmont Beebe, William G. Chapman, Thomas Curtis Clark, Mabel Cook Cole, Edmund Vance Cooke, Nancy Cox-McCormack, Helen Coale Crew, Alexander N. DeMenil, Henry Dumont, Laura May Ennis, Paul Patton Faris, Edgar J. Goodspeed, Edwin O. Grover, Edgar A. Guest, E. Julius-Haldeman, Mrs. E. Julius-Haldeman, Harry Hansen, Samuel A. Harper, Elizabeth Sewall Hill, Lynn Harold Hough, Caroline Alden Huling, Clara Ingram Judson, J. P. McAvoy, John Matter, Charles A Myall, Frank H. O'Hara, Millicent Olmstead, Eleanor Ellis Perkins, Lucy Fitch Perkins, Irving K. Pond, Gene Stratton Porter, Keith Preston, Alice C. D. Riley, Lew Sarett, John A. Scott, Marjorie Allen Seiffert, Vincent Starrett, Frances Shaw, Henry J. Smith, Roy J. Snell, Myrtella Southerland, Anne Higginson Spicer, Renée B. Stern, Ivan Swift, Eunice Tietjens, Walter Walden, Stuart Walker, Estell Frances Ward, Glenway Wescott, Payson S. Wild, Lillian P. Wilson, and Milo Winter.

The Society of Midland Authors was fortunate indeed in its president, Hobart C. Chatfield-Taylor, and its secretary, Douglas Malloch. I do not think that better men for the places could have been found. The first list of vice presidents was Emerson Hough, George Ade, Arthur Davidson Ficke, William Allen White, Will Payne, Brand Whitlock, Joseph Mills Hanson, and Hamlin Garland. To these were soon added Alice French, Maude Radford Warren, Herbert Quick, and Zona Gale.

At the first election of officers James Whitcomb Riley was elected honorary president. In a letter of acknowledgment he wrote:

> You do me great honor in choosing me to head the Society of Midland Authors, an honor I dearly appreciate in view of the fact that we Westerners, more than all others, must now compose the mainstay of our country's old ideals — the simple and lovable virtues which have been our blessed American heritage. And so, in expressing appreciation to you, I want to emphasize the high, yet lowly, mission that is ours.

I should express hearty thanks to the press. The papers of the Midland featured the organization. The Chicago *Sunday Herald* used eleven headlines above its long account of the organization of the Society. Of the notices I liked none better than the long one in the *Christian Science Monitor* of January 19, 1915.

The *Monitor* was one of the publications that stated correctly the chief object I had in mind in organizing the Midland authors (as I planned). It said:

> Besides the desire to foster the Midland in literature, the society has other aims — more intimate relationship between publishers, editors and among themselves — but the chronicling of the Midland will remain uppermost.
>
> Mr. Stahl, in explanation of the idea which led to the formation of the Society, said: "The Midland authors have not made their own country loved because they have not taken the characters or scenery that lay right at hand. You can pick up any hundred books produced by the Midland authors, and you will find less than five per cent have stayed at home in their stories. I believe in the West and its authors. They have not appreciated themselves. They will, however, gather strength by association."

At the annual meeting October 30, 1915, the officers were re-elected except Douglas Malloch, whose lecturing prevented his serving longer as secretary. Edwin Balmer was elected to that office.

October 28, 1916, a memorial service for James Whitcomb Riley was held, and officers were elected for the next twelve months. Chatfield-Taylor declined re-election and

Emerson Hough was elected president and Randall Parrish vice president. Balmer and Stahl were elected secretary and treasurer again — the secretary's office had a lot of work in it and as for the treasurer — well, once when Mary Hastings Bradley said something about my having again been re-elected treasurer I told her that in every organization there was one person markedly less clever than any of the rest; and this person would always be elected treasurer, a vexatious position and without honor, and the other members knew it. Mrs. Bradley said I was right; she was a member of three clubs and was treasurer of all three. (At that time she had several successful novels to her credit. No one, unless it was she, dreamed that this almost frail looking woman would penetrate where white woman had not gone before in Africa to live with the mountain pigmies and to shoot lions, and then to India to shoot tigers, and live to write books about her adventures and discoveries.)

At the 1916 annual meeting Mr. Chatfield-Taylor was elected honorary president.

Before the annual meeting of 1917 Mr. Balmer felt compelled to resign his office and Miss Alice Gerstenberg was elected to fill the vacancy.

She was re-elected at the annual meeting October 27, 1917; and the president and treasurer were also re-elected.

Emerson Hough and Alice Gerstenberg were two able, brilliant officers, and the Society held together although so many of its members were absorbed in war work; and it certainly had its full quota abroad.

October 26, 1918, Edwin Balmer was elected president to succeed Capt. Emerson Hough; and the secretary, Miss Gerstenberg, and also the treasurer, were re-elected.

It has seemed to me that Balmer had a wider conception and juster appreciation of what the Society should be and might be than any other member.

I CHANGE OFFICE

THE SOCIETY wished to honor itself by electing Maude Radford Warren president. It was known that Major Warren would continue her notable work abroad, especially in the Near East, and that she could not, of course, perform any of the duties of the office. Hence I was elected vice president for Illinois, which was in effect first vice president; with the understanding that I would act as president for a year, and possibly then Major Warren would return to this country. Hence October 25, 1919, Maj. Maude Radford Warren was elected president; James Taft Hatfield, secretary; Walter Taylor Field, treasurer. And I was elected vice president for Illinois. Miss Gerstenberg felt that her literary and dramatic work would not permit her longer to serve as secretary.

I was elected president in 1920 and in 1921; in October of both years.

In 1920 Mary Hastings Bradley was elected vice president for Illinois and in 1921 Louise Ayres Garnett was elected to that office. Field and Hatfield were re-elected in 1920 and 1921.

I have very few notices of the activities of the Society while I was president. In the *Step Ladder* for January 1921, there is a long and good notice of the annual meeting and dinner of the Society the October 30th preceding, following this notice:

> The Society held a luncheon at the Woman's Club, Fine Arts Building, Chicago, on Monday, November 15th, at which Mr. and Mrs. W. L. George, of England, were guests of honor. Mr. George spoke of the dangers threatening good literature. In England, magazines are not so much of a menace because they are of a low grade, but in this country, both magazines and movies, with their promise of greater reward, lure the younger writer from the field of novel writing. The American magazine story is hide-bound in its taboos and conventional requirements, leaving the artist the very minimum of scope for individual expression. He mentioned five thousand copies as the measure of a very successful first book by

a new writer. If the book retails at two dollars, the author's compensation at the customary rate of fifteen per cent will amount to fifteen hundred dollars. Of course, the new writer writes for fame, and if he makes the longed-for hit, his next book is more likely to run to fifty thousand copies. This latter is our comment, not Mr. George's.

I have always been far from favorable to the lavish entertaining of foreign authors. I have a very bad opinion of those that run after an author because he is a Britisher or who praise a book because it is by a foreign author. Altogether too much of that has been done, especially in Chicago. But remembering Mrs. George, I have never regretted that the Society of Midland Authors had this luncheon in honor of Mr. and Mrs. George; and I fervently hope that someone has each year laid a flower on Mrs. George's lonely grave in Texas.

The next notice I have in point of date is of a luncheon to another Englishman. I have never regretted that, either. The Englishman was John Drinkwater.

Other guests that day were Sinclair Lewis, Sherwood Anderson, and O. P. Heggie. Before the luncheon Sherwood Anderson came to me and insisted that I should not call on him to speak. He declared emphatically that he could never think of three sentences to utter when he was on his feet before any audience, big or small, of any character. He was so earnest about it that I believed him. So I started the post-luncheon program by asking him to rise, saying that I would not call on him to speak, as he did not feel disposed to speak that day. I thought that I had done it all in masterly fashion and all he would have to do would be to make his pretty bow and smile idiotically, as prescribed for such occasions and the prescription nearly always followed. But Sherwood had changed his mind. I think he does that occasionally. I think that I have noticed a tendency that way. He rose slowly, with great dignity, and spoke for five minutes, and faultlessly. It was one of the best little luncheon talks I have ever heard. It was a gem. I was the fellow to look foolish and smile idiotically. Sherwood has been mighty careful never to give me a chance to call on him again. I have had something saved up for several years.

During the luncheon Drinkwater asked me all about Sinclair Lewis, who was on my left. He knew nothing about Lewis, it seemed, which was not at all strange. I told him that Lewis was an accomplished newspaper man; had written several novels of merit, but not of such popularity as to be of the "best sellers"; but that his novel just published was attracting unusual attention and that I believed it had the merit to be very popular, although the majority of critics condemned the book. Drinkwater asked the title of the novel. Then I had to explain about Main Street. Have you ever reflected, dear reader, that the United States is the only country on the globe that has Main Streets? I had to tell Drinkwater all about the book to which Lewis had given the title of "Main Street." I told him something about the principal characters and the general scheme of the book. He seemed much interested.

I called on Sinclair Lewis, who spoke well; well, indeed — sound sense with a little nonsense. I was proud of the American novelist. I was glad that the English dramatist heard him.

Then I called on John Drinkwater And before he had spoken more than four minutes that master prevaricator told how he and his wife had sat up until two A.M. the last two nights before he left New York, to read "Main Street." He remembered remarkably well what I had told him about the characters in the book, the plan of it, the general scheme of it. He said how much he and his wife had enjoyed it and that they intended to read all of Mr. Lewis' books — they had not read all of them.

And some people say that our English cousins are slow!

Also, that they have no sense of humor.

Of all the people that I have met, those with the keenest sense of humor were English. I have yet to meet an English person that had at all a fair chance in life, that by grinding conditions had not been made like the dumb, driven beast, that did not see the humorous readily and did not thoroughly enjoy it.

Here I am reminded of another witty, charming Englishman we had for guest of honor at a luncheon: Wilfred T. Grenfell. That Jew who was the most friendly and the most lonesome of all men spoke of "fishers of men." Such is Dr. Grenfell. He married a Chicago girl; and at the luncheon he told of his shipboard courtship in such a whimsical, humorous, delicate way!

I have a notice of a S. M. A. dinner that appeared in the Chicago *Journal of Commerce* of April 9, 1921, from which it appears that our guests of honor were Josephine Preston Peabody, Leonore Speyer, and Louis Untermeyer.

On my initiative the S. M. A. had a dinner to Miss Jane Addams — a dinner that brought me a good deal of criticism and much more praise, because of Miss Addams' opinions about war and some wars. I took full responsibility for the dinner — a notable dinner. Rt. Rev. Charles P. Anderson, Episcopal Bishop of Chicago, spoke eloquently. The following letter was read:

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 25, 1921

My Dear Mr. Stahl:

I should be very glad, as would Mrs. Harding also, to be able to accept your invitation for Saturday evening, May twenty-eight, when your Society is giving a Farewell Dinner to Miss Jane Addams. Regrettably, our presence is quite impossible.

Please extend to Miss Addams and to those who will be her hosts at that time, the assurance of my admiration of Miss Addams, and of my interest in the convention of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. We may not all agree as to the methods by which peace and freedom are to be assured to the world, but at least we will find little difficulty in agreeing to their general desirability.

Very Sincerely Yours
Warren G. Harding

Also this:

WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN
VILLA SERENA, MIAMI, FLORIDA
For the Winter

May 25

My Dear Mr. Stahl:

I greatly appreciate your invitation and regret that an engagement in West Virginia will prevent acceptance. I would be glad to join in doing honor to Miss Addams. Please present my compliments and the wish that she may have a pleasant voyage and safe return. She goes on a very important mission.

Very truly yours
W. J. Bryan

Mr. Bryan scribbled this with pencil, which is evidence to me that he had the same experience with alleged stenographers in Florida that others have suffered.

We all agreed that the gem of the after-dinner program was a poem by Louise Ayres Garnett.

At a dinner held October 7th Stephen Graham told about the tramping trip he and Vachel Lindsay had made in the Northwest, first on one side and then the other of the unfortified line, camping out, running foot races, bandying each other; interesting stuff, and told in a most interesting way. It was afterwards syndicated and published, I believe.

Zona Gale spoke and spoke well, too, as she always does — she is one of the authors that it always pays to listen to, even when she talks over the radio. But it is not her address that I remember most vividly, I must confess. It is this:

Little Marcia Masters had an ambition to be an author some day. She was at the dinner. During the dinner I had her come to the speakers' table and I presented her to Miss Gale, making the inane remark that Marcia wished to be an author and had a long and rocky road ahead of her.

"But every step will be full of joy!" immediately exclaimed the famous author, who had, indeed, found the road long and not easy. And she talked to the little girl in that kind way of which Zona Gale is the mistress, God bless her for her big, warm heart! and Marcia will remember always, with a feeling too deep to be profaned with words, the few minutes she stood beside Zona Gale with Zona Gale's arm around her.

Looking over my clippings I find that the Chicago *Examiner* said in its issue of March 1, 1922, commenting on a dinner to Jessie Rittenhouse, that "John M. Stahl will be the presiding host of the party, which insures the customary brilliance of Midland gatherings."

I am much indebted to the *Examiner* for that and other compliments. Some of the long-suffering citizens of the Midland know how many million nice things I have said about authors and other abnormalities, while no one ever thinks to say something nice about the toastmaster. All toastmasters have just that fate. While they are dishing out the apple-sauce with a big spoon into large dishes, they are all a-hungry for some little dab of the sauce to be offered them by somebody else. And they continue to a-hunger. I feel free to speak of this, for it can be a plea only for someone other than myself — many someones — for I have permanently retired from the toastmaster business. Please, dear reader, tip it off to yourself or the other speaker of the evening to say something nice about the toastmaster who has so gracefully and eloquently avoided the full truth to make the evening pleasant, for the speakers, at least.

The Society of Midland Authors had some twenty-five dinners and luncheons while I was president; but I have on my desk clippings of only two more. I regret this, if the reader does not, for I would like to give credit to all of the authors that honored us by being our guests and charmed us by their postprandial or post-luncheon talks. But I have not a record of even their names. In my next existence I will keep a scrap-book and a diary. I will have plenty of time for this, for I can't play on even a harmonica or a jew's-harp. I hope that instead of a gold harp I will be given a steel hoe or an ax. I know how to use them and I always get happiness out of that use.

The first clipping tells of a dinner to Clara Louise Burnham and Herbert Quick.

Mrs. Burnham was one of the very first authors I consulted about the proposed organization of the Society, and she approved of my plan. When I asked her to join the Society she was ready to comply at once on this one condition: I was to see to it that she was never asked to speak. She declared that she had found it impossible to speak in public. But one evening, after several years, I told her that it was plain that her brain and tongue performed all right when she was on her feet talking to half a dozen and she must talk to us at the next S. M. A. dinner. The announcements, with her as one of the speakers, had already gone out! I will not forget her look of mingled reproach and mischief as she said, " For a long time I have wanted to talk about the interesting people on Bailey Island and I have been waiting for the person who had the sagacity — tenacity — force — ' nerve ' — to see that I could do it and must do it and would do it. I'll try." She did. And I know that those so fortunate as to hear her that night will say that they have rarely, if ever, heard a more interesting, better composed and delivered, charming address. From that time on Mrs. Burnham frequently spoke in public. She more than once laughed and told me she liked it! Always she spoke well. She was one of those that under every condition, in every situation, are ladylike — she could not have been otherwise.

The other clipping is from the Chicago *Tribune* of September 18, 1922, and tells of a dinner given to Sir Gilbert Parker.

We had a most delightful time. Sir Gilbert (one of the very few authors who look the part) was at his best. It was not his words alone, but his manner even more, that showed that he richly enjoyed the occasion. Like all the others present, he was delighted with the playing of Ruth Ray, the noted violinist. It was a happy choice to have Bruce Amsbary on the program, because of his deep study of and familiarity with Canadian literature and especially his knowledge of the French-Canadian and the literature dealing with the French-Canadian. Several times since Sir Gilbert has heartily expressed his enjoyment of that day.

For three years I served as president of the Society of Midland Authors; at the annual meeting in October 1922, Alice Gerstenberg was elected president. She was my choice for that place. Her administration was very successful. She was re-elected. She was succeeded by Edwin Balmer. In 1926 Douglas Malloch was elected president and he was re-elected twice. Under these officers the Society of Midland Authors has been a vigorous organization of gratifying usefulness.

CHAPTER XXVIII

DRAMA AND THE ARTS

FOR A number of years I was connected with two organizations which brought me in touch with interesting work and people. One was the Church and Drama League of America, known until September 1929, as the Drama League of America. The other was the Allied Arts Association.

The Drama League of America had its beginning in the Riley Reading Circle of Evanston, Illinois. In its name this group honored Alice G. D. Riley, of Evanston. The Circle met regularly, and for the purpose indicated by its middle name, and much more. One of the things that made up the " much more " led to the organization of the Evanston Drama Club, yet in vigorous existence. Among its activities was the entertainment of noted actors that came to Chicago. By the actors, at least, it and its hospitality were well known and highly esteemed. It was directed by Mrs. Riley, Mrs. A. Starr Best, and Mrs. Meaker. At one of its meetings Tyrone Power said in an address, " Why not make this national and the Drama League of America? "

Mrs. Best, a woman of truly remarkable brain activity, resourcefulness, and determination, took the hint in the question of Mr. Power. She had been thinking of greater work for the Evanston Drama Club, which could be carried on so much better if there were other similar clubs. She " took it outside of Evanston and first organized a Drama League Center in Chicago; and from here the other groups nationally."

Those responsible for the Drama League of America are all so modest that it is impossible to determine just who is guilty and to what degree. In a way they remind me of one of Thomas Nast's most famous cartoons, that of the Tammany Ring of notables, each pointing his thumb at his next neighbor. They are the most disgustingly modest aggregation I have ever encountered. In the spring of 1927 I introduced Mrs. Riley, a guest of honor, at a dinner of the Allied Arts Association and stated that she was responsible for the existence of the Drama League of America. She declared that I, the ex-president of the League, was mostly wrong. Doubtless I was. It is generally said that the League was founded April 25, 1910. Among those that did much to guide its toddling footsteps along the path were Miss Alice Houston, of Evanston, and Professor Theodore B. Hinckley, of Chicago.

Concerning itself, the Church and Drama League of America says:

> From the very beginning the League has aimed to avoid the stigma of being "high-brow"; it does not try to uplift the theatre over the audience, but merely to create an audience — an actual ticket buying audience — for good, clean, well written drama, well produced. It does not demand thesis plays or problem dramas, but is glad to support all forms of tragedy, comedy, farce, even melodrama, so long as they are thoroughly good of their kind. From one of its closest professional observers, Frederick Donaghey, dramatic critic of the Chicago *Tribune*, who has watched its efforts from the inside since its beginning and who never hesitated to call attention to its occasional mistakes, comes this keen and sympathetic comment; in a public address not long ago, this discriminating critic asserted that the League had never been high-brow in its taste but had carried on its playgoing work with a sane broadmindedness which commanded whole-hearted respect; that it had been unfailing in its recognition of merit; generous and enthusiastic in its support of worthy effort, evincing however a tenacious devotion to high standards in both writing and production; that it could be safely depended upon for support of deserving drama and had done much to help its cause.

The Church and Drama League of America is as near 100% altruistic as any organization of which I know; it is doing a variety of things, and doing them well.

I AM ELECTED PRESIDENT

In April, 1920, I was unanimously elected president of the Drama League of America. I had known of it and of some of its centers, notably the Chicago center, for some years. From its beginning my very near neighbor and a young man whom I admired very much, Theodore Ballou Hinckley, had edited *The Drama* (magazine), which was the official organ of the League. At first it was a quarterly, but it had been changed to a monthly before my election. Always it had been edited with rare ability. I had read it with much profit and pleasure. It introduced me to the Drama League of America and kept me acquainted with that organization of many activities, but all relating to the drama. It did much more, for its contents were indeed varied. I was well aware of the work of the Chicago center of the Drama League. At the time of my election the president of the Chicago center was Mrs. Harlan Ward Cooley, a woman of far more than the average ability and charm, an able executive and a tireless, unselfish worker. Her administration of the Chicago Woman's Club was justly praised in high terms. Always she treated me with ample consideration.

The Chicago center always gave me hearty support. Its present active membership is above fifteen hundred. I believe it is the largest and most active of all the centers.

One of the events I remember best in connection with my Drama League work was the holding of an institute by the Drama League in Chicago in August 1920. I was especially in favor of this institute, for I was sure that the development of the community theater was of the greatest importance not only to rural people but to some millions of town people; and this institute was to instruct in all branches of play production, to provide teachers to teach others to be teachers until wherever needed there would be some one competent to direct play production. At this first institute we had more than two hundred students, from eighteen states. As for just one item of the course of instruction, Carroll French demonstrated how, at a total cost of $1,000, could be built the most modern of ultra-modern stages; and he showed how it could be converted from a Greek temple to an Irish shanty!

We stood ready to send the institute, complete, including miniature stage and the required instructors, anywhere for the expense only. Thus we offered to bring to any serious group of persons anywhere in the country the fruition of experiments similar to those of Gordon Craig, Granville Barker, Reinhardt, and the Moscow Art Theatre.

Among the instructors were Mrs. Best, Theodore Ballou Hinckley, Bertha Iles (the greatest conductor of children's play production in this country), Mari Ruef Hofer, Dugald Walker, Linwood Taft, Lou Wall Moore, Lucy Barton, Edgar Gordon, Oliver Hinsdale, and Dorothy Meadows.

Another important event was the eleventh annual convention of the League, held at the Hotel LaSalle in Chicago. Here the signs of independent interest in the drama on the part of the " provinces " manifested themselves in what was then a startling manner. No less an authority than Prof. W. H. Bridges of Grinnell, Iowa, asserted that Broadway could not satisfy the developing drama demand of the American towns and cities outside of New York. " The educational standard has been so elevated, particularly in college towns," declared Professor Bridges, " that the average Broadway production has no appeal. Local talent has been developed to a high degree and the drama is raised from the people of the community themselves. The Drama League is largely responsible for this change."

I myself raised a voice at this convention in favor of the reunion of the church and the theater:

> In spite of the denunciation of ministers that the theatre is wrecking people's morals, the church needs the drama. The modern drama is the child of the church. It originated in the church. Today there should be a stage in every church. Literally the stage would support the pulpit. The time has come when the drama

> must return to the direction of the church, if the church is the living church of the living God.
>
> Those who regret the extreme scarcity and the limitations of stage apparel and the passionate plenitude of feminine flesh, who deplore the dramatic attractiveness given to crime and immorality, those who oppose the so-called evils of the stage, should first of all become members of the Drama League.

I have quoted this from a very complete and most excellent report in the *Clubwoman's World,* the official organ of the clubwomen of Illinois, and which was kind enough to say of me that I was " a central figure in every movement in behalf of art and literature." I owe that magazine a great debt for the support it gave me. It is doubtless unnecessary to say that always the clubwomen rendered every reasonable aid to the projects for the benefit of artists and authors, and therefore of the community, in which I was interested. And I found the large majority of their husbands, brothers, fathers, sons, enrolled as Rotarians, Kiwanians, or members of similar organizations, desirous of advancing every worthy effort to put life on a higher plane. Membership in Rotary, Kiwanis, etc. does not narrow a man; it broadens him greatly.

A luncheon at which actors then playing in Chicago were guests was a feature of the convention. Those who spoke included Lowell Sherman, Harry Beresford, Ernest Truex, Gregory Kelly, Helen Hayes, Lynn Fontanne, Lizzie Hudson Collier, and Fay Bainter.

(Helen Hayes was playing in " Bab "; Lynn Fontanne in " Dulcy "; Fay Bainter in " East is West." The plays of yesteryear. And Hazel Dawn was playing in " Gertie's Garter " and did not come to the luncheon because she thought some were puritanical and would not be kind to her. Well, I found nothing shocking in " Gertie's Garter," not even the title; and I found a great deal of amusement, real fun, in it as acted by Hazel Dawn and the others.)

I wish that I could tell in more detail of the work of the League, and could write at length of the officers who served so loyally with me; Miss Alice M. Houston, secretary for many years; Miss Carrie B. Neely, treasurer, one to be prized, worthy daughter of a prominent banker — she would put five hundred dollars of her own money in the treasury when needed. Both she and Miss Houston are women of wide culture and with sane ideas about the drama. Sydney F. Daily, of Indianapolis, was Chairman of Finances. An old friend of mine was disposed to say that "You can't squeeze molasses out of a turnip." But Daily could and would do the equivalent of that in rounding up the wherewithal for the League. He, also, had a way of making up a deficit out of his own funds. However, the most frequent financial rescuers were Mrs. Best, Mrs. Riley, and Miss Houston. Because of the facts just stated we got along fairly well, for Editor Hinckley would willingly wait a year for his salary and the people that printed *The Drama* were most commendably indifferent to the payment of their bills. As regards the non-receipt of checks from the office of *The Drama* they displayed a truly Christian resignation. But Hinckley went them even better: when he saw plainly that he never would get more than one half his salary, he displayed a sublime charity by generously donating the half he knew he would never get. With such associates I got a reputation for financial tactics, if not for financial strategy; and I am sure that not the least of the things accomplished during the years of my administration was the improvement of the financial condition of the League. Perhaps not exactly that, for condition implies something that exists.

I will give at some length my position on the spoken, or "legitimate," drama at that time, by making an extract from an address I made then. I am sure that however the movie picture may be vocalized there will remain the desire — will persist because it is fundamental — of the people for the old form of drama and the equally fundamental and persistent desire among the people to be actors in that drama. It is a matter of very great importance to the rural community that these desires be gratified. Perhaps because of my long interest in rural people and rural conditions I would stress this more than would others; but I am sure I do not stress it too much. The rural population has always been counted on to be the more stable; more conservative in attitude toward revolutionary economic and social proposals; and more respectful of the laws — the statutes of men and the rules of morality. Conditions are already such and are becoming such that if the rural population continues to be what it should be in percentage, in thought, in attitude toward government, and in wholesome ideas of ways of living; there must be development of such things among it as the community theater. Not saying that the other things should not be done, I am very sure that it would be wiser to give encouragement to the wide development of such things as the Little Theater in rural communities than to do some of the things that have had so much attention, such as stimulating the production of farm products of which already too much is produced.

In my address eight years ago I said — and "them's my sentiments" now:

> A demand for the spoken Drama is fundamental. Dramatic expression is essential. The human being, whatever his condition, will have it. It ministers to as well as grows from his mental processes and spiritual development, his conception of life, and his religion. It is essential to his self-expression, his growth, his happiness. Further, the people of the United States are a dramatic people. We make a show, a pageant, drama, out of everything possible: politics, education, love, even religion and death. Witness our political processions and speechifying, our commencement exercises, our "revivals" and "evangelists," our weddings, our christenings, our funerals. We like to see others act; we cannot avoid acting ourselves. We pose, we act, in the school, the court, the lodge, the church. No class or condition is an exception. The lack of good professional spoken drama is to the people of the United States a very serious deprivation. The existing condition should be remedied. How?
>
> The characteristics of our people that make the present condition so serious are the very agencies that will correct the present condition. The remedy will not come from outside the people, but from within.

Not the producer, nor the playwright, nor the actor, but the public, will save the public. The dramatic need, the dramatic urge, the dramatic talent of the public will satisfy that desire and need and urge. The people themselves will write their plays, will build their theatres, will stage the plays, will act them. A beginning that is proof has already been made.

Perhaps the most convincing proof, as well as the most striking, is the result of the work of Prof. Frederick H. Koch, first in the University of North Dakota (1905–1918), and in the University of North Carolina since 1918. North Dakota was (and is) purely agricultural. In 1905 the very large majority of the students at the State University were not only from the farm, but the frontier farm. Yet Professor Koch was able to form a company that in June of that year toured the state and acceptably presented Sheridan's classic comedy, " The Rivals." The company did excellent, finished work. In subsequent years the University players did high grade work in acting high class plays at various points in the state. In 1914 " A Pageant of the Northwest" was written by a group of eighteen undergraduate students and in 1916 " Shakespeare, the Playmaker," a tercentenary masque, was written in collaboration by a group of twenty undergraduate students. This work was of a high character and the pageant and the masque were well represented. A real, far reaching step was made in 1916, when Professor Koch and his University players toured the state, acting four plays written by the university students. These were plays of merit. Two of them were distinctively rural. All dealt with the life the playmakers knew, and demonstrated the dramatic possibilities of our ordinary, everyday life in country or town.

Professor Koch has accomplished the same results in the University of North Carolina. He has taught the students how to use their mental and spiritual equipment to " write their own plays, about their own people and lives, stage them, costume them, act them — and then take them right into the heart of the country they are concerned with, and make the people listen to them and enjoy them."

The plays made and acted by the University of North Carolina students are far removed from " dear old New York." They deal with the Carolina folk-superstition; with the tragedy and the comedy in negro and poor white life; with the hopes and fears of the mountain outlaw; with the problems of the industrial conflict in the cotton mills; with the melodrama of witchcraft days and the romance of university life.

These plays have much merit. They reach the understanding and the hearts, they satisfy the dramatic hunger of the common people. And making and acting these plays discovers and develops unsus-

> pected, real ability to write or to produce plays and brings to a good many the exquisite happiness of the growth of mind and spirit.
>
> What has been done in North Dakota and North Carolina can be done in every state. Montana has produced evidence of this.

I named more than a score of the leading Little Theatre groups, in all parts of the country, and continued:

> Quite often the plays produced are written by someone or a group of the community. Or the play may be by one of our best, cleanest playwrights, or by Galsworthy, Shaw, Pinero, Wilde, Barrie, or Singe. Sometimes the theater used, outdoor or building, is the actual work of the hands of the community. Often the stage and the scenery are the handiwork of the community. The play is produced by the people and the person whose part is only to hold a lantern or keep an automobile light adjusted, may be among those most interested and entertained.
>
> It has been proved that plays of the life of the locality — its people and customs — can be written and produced and in a way to satisfy the dramatic hunger, while contributing to the mental and spiritual development of the community. And these plays and their reception have in turn proved that among the common, everyday people of Massachusetts, of Colorado, of California, of North Dakota, of Florida, there is a dramatic interest — a real, live interest — in the present everyday life of the common people, as much as there ever was in the life of Troy or in the days of Camelot or Good Queen Bess. They have proved the sufficient dramatic value in the tragedy and the comedy, the sweetness and the bitterness, the joy and the sadness, the meanness and the heroism, the absurdity and the sublimity, of the life of the community. The community is dramatically sufficient unto its needs.

I do not underestimate the "movies" made vocal. Their part in the amusement and the education of the people will greatly expand; and with good roads and the automobile the rural people will make much use of them. None the less is there need of the community theater in the rural districts and in all towns and cities not visited by good actors in good plays.

I saw, not the first, but nearly the first motion picture. It was in Waukegan, a town then, a city now, some miles north of Chicago. The motion picture was originated in Waukegan. I quote from a clipping taken from *The Hamiltonian,* official organ of the big Hamilton Club of Chicago:

> George K. Spoor held the lease on the old Phoenix opera house on Washington street. Ed Amet, a local inventor, came in one day and said to Spoor, a bit excitedly, " I can make pictures move." And he could, and proved it. The motion picture show was advertised. People flocked in. The motion pictures were little more than shadowy forms, but the people cheered.
>
> Many men plunged into motion pictures about that time. Litigation came. Amet tired of it, sold out. Spoor, at heart a showman, persevered. He built up the Essanay company and is held to be the first man ever to make $1,000,000 out of films.

That first motion picture was shown in October 1895. It was of two *girls boxing!* But they wore long skirts.

I end my remarks on the Church and Drama League of America, devoted to the spoken drama, with that about the motion picture. But the motion picture will never end the chapter of the spoken drama in the lives of the people.

ALLIED ARTS ASSOCIATION

When I went to the First Southern Exposition in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1883, of the time spent in the exposition (and I was ready to enter when the doors were opened and had to be warned out when the doors were to be closed) I spent fully one half in the galleries containing the paintings and sculpture. Up to that time I had seen few paintings or pieces of sculpture worthy of the name. I have been told by competent critics that the paintings and sculptures exhibited at that exposition were of unusually high average merit. They fascinated me. Each day I saw a greater beauty, a deeper meaning, in my favorites; and each day I made the addition of at least one painting to my list of favorites. It was the first time I had been given the opportunity so to study paintings that I could understand the soul of them.

In 1885 I went to the New Orleans Exposition and saw more good paintings and sculpture there.

Among the people with whom I became acquainted in St. Louis were some that had good paintings; knew how to judge such; and taught me much about such things.

Business trips took me to New York, Boston, and other cities in which were art galleries I could visit. My occasional trips to Washington enlarged my opportunity to study paintings and statuary.

In time came my residence in Chicago; and the World's Columbian Exposition and its exhibition of paintings and sculptures. Nearly all the French people in the two French clubs spoken of in a previous chapter were intelligently interested in the fine arts and from them I learned much about those arts. My interest in them was increased.

In a small way, but as much as we well could, my wife and I lent encouragement to local artists and art organizations. Years ago she became a life member of the Art Institute of Chicago. For some years I was a member of the Palette and Chisel Club. I was glad to be a member of the Arts Club of Chicago from near its beginning and as long as it had anything of consequence to do with art. As our means would permit my wife and I bought paintings of local artists. I give these small facts to show the way to the Allied Arts Association.

I planned an organization of authors, painters, sculptors, composers, musicians, architects, and etchers. I asked to meet me a few friends that I knew were of far vision, yet safe and sensible in their ideas and advice; and who had demonstrated their energy, industry, loyalty, and unselfishness. This last I especially prized more and more each year. Among those I had meet with my wife and me were Mr. and Mrs. Carl S. Junge; Mr. and Mrs. Frank V. Dudley; Prof. and Mrs. Fay Cooper Cole; Mr. and Mrs. Robert H. Becker; Mr. and Mrs. Mason Warner; and Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Bruce Amsbary.

We soon reached agreement on all points. Constitution and by-laws were framed and adopted. The Allied Arts

Association was duly incorporated under the laws of the state of Illinois in September 1923.

Early in October the first meeting of the incorporated Allied Arts Association was held and I was elected president; Frank V. Dudley, vice president; Fanny Junge, secretary; and Mason Warner, treasurer. The directors, in addition to the officers, were Robert H. Becker, Wallace Bruce Amsbary, Mary C. P. Stahl, Carl S. Junge, and Charles A. Myall.

The first dinner of the new organization was on October 20th and the guest of honor was Herbert Quick. The dinner was in the Grand Ball Room of the Auditorium Hotel and more than two hundred attended. Among the guests were Stuart P. Sherman, Llewellyn Jones, Louise Ayres Garnett, Anne Higginson Spicer, and Keith Preston.

It will be seen that our first guests were authors. To show the nature of the activities of the A.A.A., I will give a little of some of the many generous newspaper notices of our first dinners. The A.A.A. "season" has been, each year, from October 15 to May 15, and during the four seasons that I was its president it had eight to ten dinners each season. We kept in view always the objects of the A.A.A., among which were to encourage the beginners in art and increase recognition of those that had "arrived." I am happy that two score of young authors, for example, received their first public recognition by the Association; and it is certain that the publicity given our dinners mightily increased the Midland interest in authors and books. To illustrate: the week after the dinner to Herbert Quick the sales in Chicago of his "Vandermark's Folly" were more than multiplied by three, and it went into the list of "best sellers." More than a dozen other authors had the pleasure of noting a similar result from the A.A.A. dinners in their honor. Of course these dinners were not all of the work of the Association. But they were the fraction of its activities that got most publicity; and without newspaper publicity the A.A.A. could not have accomplished what it did.

I give my heartiest thanks to the "society editors," not because they gave us the most publicity; indeed, they did not; but because they gave us so much compared with what I expected. Of course the "literary editors" gave us liberal aid — not those of Chicago alone, but a gratifying number in other cities. The Association is very grateful to them. We got support in unexpected quarters. Very helpful indeed was the sympathetic and intelligent accounts of our activities sent out by the Associated Press. No one more accurately or fully grasped our objectives than the representative the Associated Press first sent and whose name, I deeply regret, I can not recall; and their representative who took his place, Frank Little Hayes. The dispatches and stories they sent out, and which were used by nearly all the papers served, could not have been worded better to our liking.

I have been a member of the Authors' Club of London, England, for years and one result is that I am sent regularly copies of the papers of London and other cities containing long and excellent accounts of the dinners of that club. The authors that are guests at the dinners of the Authors' Club are no more eminent and famous on the average than those the A.A.A. had for its guests; but while the London papers give always more than a column to their report in their news columns of each dinner of the Authors' Club and often much more than a column, the Chicago papers would not give a line in their news columns to any dinner of the A.A.A. When I was president of the Society of Midland Authors and Herbert Quick was its guest of honor at the dinner mentioned in the preceding chapter, I said, when presenting Edwin Balmer, whom I had persuaded to be the toastmaster of the evening, that it was certain that not one of the Chicago papers would have a line about that dinner in their columns the next day, while it was almost equally certain that their front pages would be occupied largely the next morning with big block display lines and a full account of some atrocious murder. As it happened — or occurred

— there was not a line about the dinner to Herbert Quick in any Chicago paper the next day; and the front page of each was occupied largely with an account of a brutal murder — the headlines of one paper reached across the entire front page. The last London papers I got contained in each more than a column account of a dinner of the Authors' Club; and those that had anything at all about a murder just committed gave it at the most less than four inches of space, with small headlines. The person who has been a student of the history of ascendant and of decadent nations, of peoples who are now admired and those who are pitied by intelligent readers, knows that in some respects the foreign newspapers are more admirable, and especially much better regard the interests of society and the nation, are much more truly patriotic, than are our own papers, so admirable in many things.

I had been trying to get Sherman to a dinner in Chicago, at which he might meet Miss Butcher, Jones, Hansen, and others, with some of whom he had so vigorously, violently crossed swords that the contacts had made more than scintillations; there had been coruscations, to the great entertainment and profit of the hoi polloi. I had met Sherman and I knew his judgment of certain authors and of the literature of the Victorian period. I was pleased that my judgment more often was in accord with his than otherwise. Certainly he was much better qualified to judge them than I was; and I think we always like to know that our views are approved by someone superior to us in that particular territory. Of course if one is a diplomat he may not put it just that way. In 1913, while Ambassador to France, Myron T. Herrick wrote me for my views on certain agricultural and economic questions — he knew that I had made a study of such questions in Europe as well as the United States. So had he; and of course a much better study. However, I complied with his request. I received his letter of hearty thanks in which he said, " How pleased I am that my views coincide with yours." If anyone had asked me to name the most diplomatic diplomat in the world, without hesitation I would have named Myron T. Herrick!

I had fifteen friends to lunch with me at the Congress Hotel the day of the dinner to Quick. I invited Llewellyn Jones and Stuart P. Sherman. I had very much enjoyed what each had said of the other; I had profound respect and more for both; and I was keenly anticipative of their first meeting, which would be at my luncheon. All my friends had assembled except Sherman. I made a search of the hotel lobby and found him concealed behind a post. Quick and three or four others were the first encountered when I brought him to my other friends; and when I was to introduce him to Jones, I had no opportunity — they held out their right hands simultaneously; and from that moment until after midnight it was impossible for anyone else to have more than a few disconnected, absentminded words from either of them, as Fanny Butcher and others will testify. Their manner indicated that they had even found points of agreement about the author of the Shelburne Essays and delver into Hellenistic philosophies. Whereat I rejoiced exceedingly, for there has clung to me persistently a St. Louis predilection.

I have been privileged to hear a goodly number of post-prandial programs and I have never heard at any other such an exchange of apt, witty, merciless, good-natured thrusts as that between Jones and Sherman that evening. To the address of each could be applied the adjective *brilliant* without the least exaggeration.

Jones' editorial on Sherman, a few days after his death, will appear elsewhere.

On no other occasion did I ever see Herbert Quick nearly so wrought upon as he was that evening. The dinner ensemble was calculated to do far more than please. As he sat beside me I observed that his breathing became deeper and deeper. He told me afterwards that he believed he had never on any other occasion spoken so forcibly; he knew that never before had he been so in earnest. He told me or wrote me a dozen times that the evening was the zenith of his life as an author; that at no other time had he been so happy and exalted because of the work of his pen.

At the next dinner of the Allied Arts Association, Miss Alice French ("Octave Thanet") was the guest of honor. (While nearly always the A.A.A. had more than one author as its guest of honor, sometimes one of the several was *the* guest of honor.) Frank V. Dudley, "the Painter of the Dunes," was our guest of honor at a later dinner. At another dinner the guests of honor were Alice Hegan Rice, Cale Young Rice, Glenn Ward Dresbach, and Jay William Hudson.

In a long, able editorial about these dinners, Llewellyn Jones said, "The works of Mr. Rice are probably better known abroad than here, although he is now becoming recognized as one of our leading poets and dramatists. He has nearly a dozen successful books to his credit."

If I am not mistaken, the first of Cale Young Rice's poems published in book form were published in England; and I know that they and his other poems have had greater praise in England than in the United States; which is one of the things that make me inclined to think, good American that I am, that the English literary judgment is better than our own; for undoubtedly Mr. Rice is a great poet.

The author of "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch" read a charming little story she had written for the occasion. Cale Young Rice is one poet who knows how to read — I am sure that not one who heard him read that night will ever forget his poem, "The Wife of Judas." Glenn Ward Dresbach is another poet who knows how to read and this dinner was in the nature of adoption and he has been a loyal son of Chicago and the Midland ever since. Jay William Hudson was coming back to the home of his youth for that evening and the city which he had written about in his "Nowhere Else in the World." But we loved him most because of his "Abbé Pierre," and I am glad that his latest book is about "Abbé Pierre's People."

I wish that I might tell of all the dinners of the A.A.A. while I was president; but the foregoing must suffice, and it will suffice to give an idea of this line of A.A.A. activities. Only I must mention the dinner at which Will Allen Dromgoole, of Nashville, Tennessee, and Robertus Love, of St. Louis, were two of our guests. They gave us most interesting addresses. And I must mention the dinner in memory of Eugene Field and B. L. Taylor. Most beautifully at that dinner were tributes paid by Slason Thompson, Frank M. Morris (good friend of both Field and Taylor and now with them — dear, big hearted Frank Morris), Anne Higginson Spicer (" Anchusa "), Laura Lee Randall (" Iris "), Horace Bridges (" Pontifex "), Henri David (" H. D." who wrote always in French for B. L. T.'s Column), J. U. Higinbotham (" J. U. H."), Payson S. Wild (" Ferus "), and last, but far from the least, the gracious and generous tribute of Richard Henry Little, only no one calls him that. He is Dick or R. H. L. On the death of B. L. T. he put behind him many hairbreadth escapes as a war correspondent to conduct the *Tribune* Column and he has made a mighty good job of it to this date.

I have written of the dinner at which Alice Hegan Rice and Cale Young Rice were our guests. Another couple who have done joint literary work are Julia Scott Vrooman and Carl (Schurz) Vrooman. And both couples are as interesting and charming as people can be. Mr. and Mrs. Vrooman have written together " The Lure and the Love of Travel." They are such great travelers that they are unusually well qualified to tell of the lure and the love of travel; and both have unusual literary ability. Both are the sole authors of books.

Although the A.A.A. did much more than dine, a list of those " we have with us tonight " will give a good idea of the range of its activities. These were our dinner guests: Homer Croy, Earl H. Reed, Julia Scott Vrooman, Robertus Love, (Miss) Will Allen Dromgoole, "Duke Bakrak" (Bachrach), Carl S. Vrooman, Wallace Bruce Amsbary, Mabel Cook Cole, Louise Ayres Garnett, Glenn Ward Dresbach, Charles A. Myall, Dorothy Aldis, Clara Louise Burnham, Susan Wilber Jones, Francesca Falk Miller, William C. Emerson, Llewellyn Jones, Opie Read, Myrtella Southerland, Douglas Malloch, Harry F. Atwood, Anne Higginson Spicer, Charles Farwell Edson, Edwin Balmer, Lily A. Long, Margaret Hill McCarter, Lew Sarett, Grace Boylan Geldert, Eleanor Gridley, Elizabeth Guion Hess, H. McClellan Hess, Joan Young, Robert Baldwin, Frank Hulburt O'Hara, Altha Leagh Bass, George B. Utley, Olga Menn, Lorado Taft, Nellie V. Walker, Fay Cooper Cole, Samuel A. Harper, Jens Jensen, Dorothy Sherman Torehiana, Marian Chase Schaeffer, Mrs. John Bohr, Clara Ingram Judson, Lydia J. Trowbridge, Sophia Camenisch, Mary Dickerson Donahey, Mary McKibben Harper, William Donahey, Elizabeth Reynolds, Elizabeth Sewall Hill, Slason Thompson, Frank Morris, Mason Warner, Carrie Jacobs Bond, Albert Cotsworth, Joseph Birren, Mrs. George T. Palmer, Pauline Palmer, Mrs. Charles W. Leigh, Mrs. E. J. Murray, Julian Arnold, Henry Dumont, Hannah Butler, Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Eddy, Howard V. O'Brien, McNair Ilgenfritz, Sig. Francisco Daddi, Janet A. Fairbank, Fanny Butcher, Madame Umroth, Otto Kney, Ruth Ray Wilson, J. U. Nicolson, Eugenia Van de Ver, Melita Kreig, Ethel Louise Coe, Hon. and Mrs. Henry R. Rathbone, Albin Polasek, Estrid Buck, Ella S. Oumiroff, Callie J. Stillson, Mr. and Mrs. Harlan Randall, Shafto Dean, Joseph B. Straus, Richard Henry Little, Irene Crandall, Florence Crocker Comfort, Alice C. D. Riley, Elizabeth Moritz, John McMahill, Jr., Etheljeane Roscoe, Emma Parrish, Wally Heymar, and others — I regret that my memoranda are not complete and that the one thing about me remarkable for efficiency is my forgettery.

In the above list are the names of authors, painters, sculptors, musicians, and a few others; the names of those whose work was not far from its ending, and the names of those whose work was not far from its beginning — the one to be honored, the other to be encouraged, and both to carry our best wishes on their way. We most desired and we most enjoyed to give a word of appreciation and cheer to the novice; or to one who had served an apprenticeship, but was come among strangers. And I hope that we never lost sight of the fact that the best way to encourage the artist is to buy his wares. The true artist is proud, very proud, far too proud for his mere material good: his best friend will understand that and in both his preaching and his practice will make manifest the invisible value of artistic things.

ASSOCIATES AND SUCCESSORS

In the Allied Arts Association as in the Writers' Guild I was fortunate indeed in my official associates. During the four years that I was president, Fanny Junge was secretary. She was everything that a secretary should be and none of the things that a secretary should not be. Mason Warner, treasurer, has proved himself the model officer in half a dozen organizations; and when his business made it advisable for him to refuse re-election after two years of service, the A.A.A. was fortunate in getting Dudley C. Meyers to take the office. When, after four years' service Mrs. Junge declined positively (a woman's " choose " has no taint of doubt) to serve longer, Meyers was made secretary as well as treasurer. For two years Frank V. Dudley was vice president, and he was active and therefore truly helpful, with suggestions, plans, tactful handling, and taking a part on the program when desired. When he decided to spend nearly all his time in his studio in the Indiana dunes and his numerous exhibitions took him to rather distant points, he declined re-election and his place was taken by Joseph Birren, another eminent painter, and a most helpful officer. I would probably think that the program he prepared for a dinner in January 1927, at which he presided, was the best the A.A.A. ever had, were it not for the programs, prepared by Olga Menn and Fay Cooper Cole for dinners at which they presided. Miss Menn, from its beginning president of the Junior Friends of Art, of charming personality and possessed of a remarkable voice well trained, not only sang for the A.A.A. on several occasions, but as the representative of the musicians (as Birren was and is of the painters) prepared the programs of dinners at which she presided — dinners that touched the highest plane of A.A.A. achievement. She counts among her friends such musicians as leading members of the Chicago and Metropolitan Opera companies and such is the charm of her personality that they are pleased to obey her wishes. It was deeply regretted that in the fall of 1927 she refused re-election. Fay Cooper Cole, author of remarkable adventures and experiences, sometimes yet spoken of as "the anthropologist of the Scopes trial," and who is the head of the anthropological department of the University of Chicago, has been first vice president of the A.A.A. since it was organized, which is proof that the A.A.A. could not find anyone else so well fitted for the place — original in ideas; bold in conceptions; resourceful, tactful, and energetic in action. Add to these my wife, Mason Warner, Carl S. Junge, Wallace Bruce Amsbary, Charles A. Myall, and Robert Becker for additional directors, and the reader will understand why the A.A.A. so rapidly gained a sure and high place.

The A.A.A., profiting by the experience of other organizations, was careful always to restrict its active (voting) membership to a very few selected with extreme care. As a result there was never the least dissension or cross-purpose action.

When, in 1927, it was no longer possible for me to be president, both Cole and Birren declined the office, and Oskar J. W. Hansen, sculptor, and a vice president, was elected. The vice presidents are: Fay Cooper Cole, representing Literature; Joseph Birren, representing Painting; Mrs. Howard Willetts (for some years president of the Chicago center of the Drama League), representing the

Drama; and Charles Farwell Edson, representing Music. The directors are Fanny Junge, Sophia Camenisch, Francesca Falk Miller, Wallace Bruce Amsbary, and Dorothy Aldis. Any organization would be fortunate to have such officers and directors. Under their guidance the A.A.A. will, I am sure, have a useful, honorable career.

CHAPTER XXIX

EMIGRES

STUART P. SHERMAN

THE FARTHEST reaching migration of which we know is that about which we know nothing. We can only believe — or hope. The émigré of émigrés is he that goes to "the undiscovered country from whose bourn no traveler returns." Yet how close he may be to us!

Certainly there was never an actor more cultured than Donald Robertson. He was a man of amazing culture. And of big, warm heart. The last note I had from him began, "Do you know I have seldom been more graciously affected in my life than when I came home tonight and found your books. They came on a blue day and have turned it into a red-letter night." Something about Robertson frequently reminded me of Stuart P. Sherman. Both felt too keenly and deeply for their comfort. Can one be too earnest?

Miss Fanny Butcher, the literary editor of the Chicago *Tribune*, said in the *Tribune* of October 27, 1923, in a fine notice of the Allied Arts Association dinner I have written about:

> Stuart Pratt Sherman gave the most fascinating and brilliant talk on the writers of the middle west last Saturday evening at the dinner to Herbert Quick that it has been the pleasure of this person to hear for some time. It was literature! And it was unforgettable criticism. He had heard it told, he said, that to know the real charm of a charming woman a man must be in love with her. Most of the much talked of authors of the middle west were constantly falling in and out

of hate but never in and out of love with the middle west, he said. Their pictures of her might be, therefore, very brilliant, very amusing, or very sardonic, but they were not, in any sense, charming. " And right here, Mr. Quick," he said, turning to the fine, simple lover of the west, " is where you come in." That is a clumsy report of a really fine speech — necessitated by lack of space. When it appears in a book — and it should, it is too good a piece of criticism to be unpublished — I'll tell you.

In a letter to me dated October 21, 1922, Sherman wrote:

> I am no after dinner speaker. I have no hour's message prepared for the Midland Authors. On the other hand, I am no extemporiser, nor public entertainer. Before I could appear with any satisfaction to myself in such a capacity, I should have to meditate on the matter for a month, and I haven't now any time to meditate on it at all.
>
> In Chicago, the one serious piece of business that needs to be done is to obtain some " publicity " for literature. At the present time that needs to be done through the newspapers, mainly. Those of you in the city who have influential acquaintances ought to get the editors and managers of the newspapers by the ear and persuade them in some fashion that the whole matter of literature is as important to the world as the stealing of a gland from some drunken Greek or some woman's murdered doll twins. As long as incidents of this sort are printed daily to your entire populace as far more significant and important to them than anything and everything that is done in the entire world of letters at home and abroad, it is idle for Chicago authors or Midland authors to hope for any recognition of themselves in Chicago; or, what is of far greater importance, for any recognition of the place of literature in a civilized society.

(He made the mistake of speaking of a civilized society. In Chicago it was not a civilized society. Nothing more improbable or impossible could have been thought of than to show the managing editors of the Chicago papers that literature had any importance compared with murders and bootlegging, for examples.)

Another letter, dated October 23, 1923, refers to the Quick-Sherman dinner I have written about:

> Your dinner guests were in excellent temper, thanks to the skill of the toast-master in cajolery and compliment. They seemed ready to take anything in pleasant vein and were, I thought, remarkably responsive. But my stuff wouldn't do cold at all. By this same mail

I have refused another Chicago man who, mirabile dictum, offered me $50.00 for it. I refused for the same reason: it was written to be spoken, not to print.

I had a good time at the dinner, enjoyed conversing with Mrs. Spicer on my right, and enjoyed the fine, long talk with Llewellyn Jones, besides the pleasure of knowing you better, and the pleasure of meeting Quick and other celebrities. I was sorry not to hear more of Earl Reed's talk; but one can't get everything at once. — You must have a jolly time with your presidencies.

Dated Urbana, June 9, 1924:

I thank you heartily for your kind gesture toward the "parting guest," and should much like to be able to follow it. But we find ourselves with such a mess of things to do, what with moving our goods and winding up a college year here, and finding a home in N. Y., and making plans for the fall — between now and the 24th of June, when we sail for England, that there seems to be absolutely no place to "plug in" on the way. Sometime I hope to retire and read philosophy in preparation for a future life: then I will surely stop off for a day in Chicago and devote it to trying to discover the philosophy of that great misunderstood city — under your guidance.

I had a puzzling letter from him July 11, 1926. And then — the last word from him — and how near he was to the end of life's journey! On a Pike's Peak picture card, postmarked Colorado Springs, and dated July 26, 1926:

I have not "forgotten the West" — see reverse.

In his *Post Literary Review* of September 2, 1926, Llewellyn Jones had this fine, generous, just, wise editorial:

STUART P. SHERMAN

In the recent death of Stuart P. Sherman we have lost perhaps the most significant figure in American criticism. His fellow critics who write for newspapers will especially mourn his loss, for he was giving a new dignity to newspaper criticism when he died. Ten years ago there was a sort of dividing line between the so-called academic critic of books, whose work appeared, for instance, in the *Nation* before it became radical, when Paul Elmer More was an outstanding contributor to its pages and an outstanding example of the academic critic, and on the other hand the newspaper critic who was usually a defender of the newer tendencies, was often flippant and sometimes "impressionistic" in the worst sense of the word. And of course, few newspapers made any serious attempt at literary criticism. Bliss Perry, for instance, felt quite justified in making a blanket condemnation of the newspaper book critics of the country — in an article in the *Yale Review* since republished in a book of essays.

But within the last few years the metropolitan papers have nearly all enlarged their literary supplements, and the New York *Herald-Tribune* did the unexpected and also the happy thing when — about two years ago — it called Mr. Sherman to take over its literary supplement. He was at that time a teacher of English at the University of Illinois. Mr. Sherman had been an academic critic in both senses of the word: he was, by profession, of the academy, and held to the same type of conservative thinking in literary matters that characterizes Paul Elmer More. We had disagreed violently with the judgments expressed in his "On Contemporary Literature" before we met him — at a dinner given by the Allied Arts Association — and found him much more human, more gay, more highly humorous, than some of his strictures on contemporary authors had led us to picture him. It was soon after this that he went to New York.

Then a change began to take place. The intellectual Puritan in him retired in a measure. Whether the new emphasis which his position required him to put on the contemporary caused him to judge it more on its own merits and less as a departure from what the classical form would dictate; or whether the change was one which was due in any event; the fact remains that the man who had been hostile to all that is connoted when such names as Dreiser and Mencken are mentioned, began to be hospitable — not so much to Dreiser, whose bad writing would, of course, offend an ear as sensitive as was Mr. Sherman's — but at least to the Dreiserian sincerity and to Mr. Mencken's gusto. He not only praised Sinclair Lewis, but what is more remarkable, he praised at least some of the work of Mr. Ben Hecht.

Thus at the time of his death, Mr. Sherman, knowing the best of classical literature, was becoming one of the champions of the newer, more revolutionary literature. And it needs such champions — often its more loudly professing friends are its greatest enemies. And apart from that he was demonstrating that a newspaper can publish a fine literary supplement, with real criticism, that makes a demand on the intelligence of its readers, and that such a supplement may be successful from the point of view of the newspaper publisher.

And all the other literary supplements of the country were the stronger for this success.

I do not know what work of Ben Hecht Dr. Sherman praised, but I am sure that he must have liked the "1001 Afternoons" — worthy the praise of any critic. And one of the silliest misdemeanors (it could not be dignified as a crime) in the history of our literature was the attempt to stop the reading of Dreiser's books, not because the style was so faulty — and such an imperfection does not justify public execution — but because they told the naked truth, nakedly, and with a force to which it would not be culpable to apply the word terrific.

Other works of the Gods — in manifold wise they reveal them;
Manifold things unhoped-for the Gods to accomplishment bring;
And the things that we looked for, the Gods deign not to fulfil them;
And the paths undiscovered of our eyes, the Gods unseal them.

Quoted by Stuart P. Sherman, in "Letters to Cornelia," from Bacchea.

EMERSON HOUGH

When I come to write of Emerson Hough I think of a meeting of a committee of the Society of Midland Authors shortly after the organization of the Society. While I was made a member of that committee, much against my expressed desire, by such hearty action that I should have felt myself welcome in its meetings, I was aware of the petty jealousies among some of the Illinois authors which had been made manifest at the preliminary meeting; and I did not know the members of the committee, all broad-minded, liberal people, as well as I came to know them. It was cold outside the day of the meeting; and as I paused just inside the room in which most of the committee had already assembled, it seemed to me that a good deal of that coldness had affected the demeanor of those present. But Emerson Hough, with a smile on his face and his hand outstretched, motioned me to a chair beside him.

I think again of meeting Emerson Hough, abruptly, for we were hurrying along the street, he to see the first showing of the motion picture made from his "Covered Wagon."

Never before had I seen him so animated, so happy. He was sure the picture would put a round sum in his pocket; and while he was the least disposed of all authors to think of his bank account when he wrote, he said to me that day that always he had kept the future in view and had felt under some compulsion to write; while his books had been successful and he had gained an easy financial position, it was because he had *worked* with his pen; and now he felt that in the future he could regard his writing somewhat differently, and he would write more leisurely, perhaps more carefully, and he continued, " Now I can write just what I want most to write. I shall do better work than ever before. I am at just the right age physically and mentally to do my best work. Some day I'll send you an autographed page of something better than the Lancaster Rifle! " He referred to what he says in his " The Way to the West " of the American rifle, first made by Dechert in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania. (That about Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, and the rifle that made possible the United States of America, had pleased me much, for the first of my ancestors in what is now the United States, a good Mennonite, was permitted to leave Berne in 1711, and take his family with him, in consideration of his signing an agreement never to return; and like so many Mennonites about that time, he reached Lancaster county in 1712.)

Three weeks after my meeting Emerson Hough, hurrying to see the picture of his " Covered Wagon," he was dead! He died April 30, 1923.

Emerson Hough was a sportsman. He had hunted all kinds of big game: buffalo, elk, deer, caribou, Rocky Mountain goats, Rocky Mountain sheep, grizzlies, cinnamon bear, etc. He explored the Yellowstone Park in the winter of 1895, going on ski. One result of this trip was the Act of Congress to protect the Park buffalo.

He was the author of twenty-eight successful books. He knew well the frontier from Texas to Montana. Of him could be said in strict truth that in nature and manner he was a gentleman.

GENE STRATTON PORTER

WHEN she received from the publisher the first copies of her first volume of poetry, "The Fire Bird," she autographed one of the volumes and sent it to me. On the flyleaf, above her signature, she wrote what she told me were three Indian wishes:

> A trail on the mountain tops;
> A sheltered camp fire;
> A seat in the council lodge.

Shortly after that she wrote me about "The Fire Bird":

> I know that it is the highest grade of literary value I have ever attained; but, alas! like Pear's Soap, it must be "advertised by its loving friends." I do greatly hope that you will like it, for I loved making it.

Later she wrote me:

> So far as poetry is concerned, within the past week I have had a letter from Dr. Charles Wharton Stork, who is the most accomplished linguist within my knowledge, a Princeton University professor until recent years, a poet himself, and a man widely informed in the literature of all nations, and the present editor and publisher of "Contemporary Verse." Dr. Stork writes: "I believe that your epics will live longer than your novels and will fall into place with the best we have done thus far in this country."

Following her quotation of Dr. Stork's letter, she wrote, what was emphatically true, "I have had similar letters from a number of the best equipped critics of the country."

But while her novels sold up to sixteen million, her "The Fire Bird" sold only moderately. Again she wrote me:

> If I do say it as shouldn't, there are half a dozen verses in The Fire Bird that to me stand unequalled in the lyric poetry of its class here, or in any literature with which I am familiar. One of these, the mother's description of her first-born, you will find on page 61 — it begins, "He was a young chieftain of spirit magic." And another instance, the last verse on page 56, carrying over to page 57.

Was she a free verseist? In one of her letters to me she wrote:

> I think I can not better express myself than by a Biblical quotation: "Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good." Everything is changing; old forms of self expression are bound to change with the new environment, broader culture, and under the impetus of world sweeping waves of almost hysterical emotion caused by war. Some of the new poetry is painfully beautiful.

Her opinion of Amy Lowell may well be of interest. In writing me about a "poetry dinner" of the Allied Arts Association that I was planning—it was when I was president of that society — she said:

> I do wish that Mary Austin might participate in this meeting. She has made a detailed study of poetical forms from the beginning onward. She is a woman of wide information, keen intellect, and facile expression. She would inject an element of interest and of authentic information into this meeting to a degree that no other woman of my acquaintance is capable of doing, with the possible exception of Amy Lowell. This latter lady would be more didactic, but no better informed — not so great a poet, and wholly lacking in the personal magnetism of Mrs. Austin.

I might say that I am a great admirer of the work of Amy Lowell; she was my helpful friend and found time to write me most interesting and valuable letters, but I fear that the final verdict will be that she was not nearly so great a poet as certain schools of poetry and certain mutual admiration societies have tried valiantly to make themselves and others believe. Perhaps she was greatest as biographer and critic.

In the spring of 1924 my wife and daughter and I had dinner and spent the evening at Mrs. Porter's home in Los Angeles — the last time I saw her. There were no other guests. "I wanted you all to myself," she said. She had been "on location" for a week and was enthusiastic about the picture she was directing. "I have just bought a mountain!" she exclaimed. "I will have a home in California — beautiful, grand view — everything — but not so dear as Limberlost." She had recently sat for her photo and had proofs of a dozen different poses; and kindly asked us to select the three we thought the best. Two weeks later she sent me her framed photo — the pose I liked best — autographed. It hangs between the autographed photos of Marcella Sembrich and Herbert Quick and as I pen this sentence I stop to look at them. What thoughts and emotions are stirred up by a photograph! What multitude of curses and myriads, myriads of blessings for one Daguerre!

It was the Easter season when we dined that evening with Gene Stratton Porter. As we were leaving she handed me a copy of her " Jesus of the Emerald," just from the press. " I wished to hand it to you myself," she said. It is autographed to the Stahls with this: " In hoc signo, Easter, 1924." It was evident that to this volume of poetry she gave great value; that she had greater pride in it than in any of her previous books. She believed that of all her writings it was the best and worthiest as regards subject and treatment and result. I fear that not all, perhaps not many, will agree with her as to this. That evening I was able to show her a letter, received shortly before, from Amy Sherman Bridgman, written from Bournemouth, in which it was said: " Mrs. Stratton-Porter may like to know that I see ' Freckles ' here more often than any other American story." She was much pleased by the letter, and said with evident and justifiable pride that she was the most widely read of all American novelists; that the sale of her books was far above fifteen million copies and the books were selling faster than ever before. And yet it was plain that in the writing of it and in the finished work she found the most satisfaction and happiness in " Jesus of the Emerald "; that of all her books she hoped most for its immortality.

In the summer of 1926 my wife and I made a pilgrimage to the second Limberlost Cabin and there spent hours crammed full of the joy of seeing the " cabin " and hundreds of trees and shrubs and plants and vines planted by the hands that had so well wrought with the pen. Mr. Porter was all kindness. Few things in the life of my wife have touched her more deeply than his gift of flowers from the garden so precious to him and so dear to his wife, gone on before; and he gave us to drink from the spring at which,

HERBERT QUICK

GENE STRATTON PORTER

he said, " We drank and picnicked when I was courting Gene Stratton, and when we could we bought this land and built our home at the spring."

WILBUR D. NESBIT

YES, I gulped more than once when I heard in August 1927, of the sudden death of Wilbur D. Nesbit. Hundreds of warm personal friends of his did the same thing. I don't like to see the word *love* used often to express the feeling of men for one another. We men of the United States wish to be so unemotional and cold that to speak of one of us loving another of us, smacks a little of insincerity. But I will not hesitate to use the word love to express my feeling for such men as Wilbur D. Nesbit.

Chicago Rotary No. 1 proposed to have a luncheon in honor of the authors of Chicago and vicinity in 1927 (think of that, Mencken); and by Edgar L. Bill, from its beginning the director of radio station WLS — the luncheon was, I think, his idea — I was asked to arrange the program and act as toastmaster. That last was a joke, for I was told that the time would be so limited that only two of the authors could speak at all and I must only name the others — there were more than forty of them. But as I was about to introduce Nesbit the desire to have him recite his " Your Flag and my Flag " was so strong that I asked him to recite it. As he arose there came into his fine face a look that I reverently set down here as holy patriotism; that love of country and flag that is so great because they stand for so much of the hope of better things for all mankind. Later he wrote me about this occasion:

> I want to thank you very much for thinking of me in connection with the Rotary Club luncheon of last Tuesday. It was a most enjoyable occasion, and, as I told you when leaving, for once in my life I was taken entirely by surprise when called on to speak. But it was a wonderful crowd and I was mighty glad that you did that.
>
> I have always been sorry that our pathways do not cross more

frequently, because I really want to know you a whole lot better than I do.

Yes, ours were the ways of busy business men, knowing one another for twenty years, sending each other greetings occasionally, meeting rarely, promising ourselves each time that in the future we would meet much oftener. I am reminded of George Ade's story of the business man who worked so hard and saved and grew richer and richer and richer and every year promised himself that the next year he would get out of business and hunt up his old friends and buy a chicken farm. One day they found him dead at his desk. (Some day, after he is dead, the people of this hurrying maggoty mass and mess in the United States of America will wake up to the fact that in what George Ade writes the fun is the small, very small, part of the good in it.)

Nesbit wrote literally thousands of poems and almost as many prose sketches for newspapers and magazines. During the last fifteen years of his life he gave some of his time, busy advertising agent that he was, seriously to the production of the best in him. He liked to write of boyhood and for children.

He was the author of a score of books. He also wrote the verses for Claire Brigg's "When a Feller Needs a Friend"; and he wrote the book for "The Girl of My Dreams," a successful musical show that was on the boards for several years. He was a poet; a wit; a ready after-dinner speaker; a famous toastmaster; a gentleman; and a true friend.

JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD

ONE of the Michigan authors who spoke enthusiastically of what the poet, Myrtella Southerland, did (for twenty years she has been tireless in her work for art and literature) was James Oliver Curwood, whose death August 13, 1927, was a real loss to the reading people of this country. He was less than forty years of age. He always resided in Michigan. From 1900 to 1907 he was in newspaper work as assistant editor and then editor of the Detroit *News-Tribune*. He resigned to take up literary work exclusively.

His first book, "The Courage of Captain Plum," appeared in 1908. He wrote twenty-five other books! They had millions of readers.

Curwood was one of the foremost authorities on matters pertaining to the Canadian northland. He was the only American ever employed by the Canadian government as exploratory and descriptive writer. Some critics of his books sought to cast doubt on the accuracy of some of the things he had written about the north of Canada, but it was shown that there was not the least trace of nature faking or any misstatements in what he had written.

He worked hard — too hard. He would have lived longer and have accomplished more had he been more moderate in his work. I knew of his overindulgence in work and took the liberty of chiding him; and he would reply that what I had said was of the nature of the pot remarking about the complexion of another kitchen utensil, or words to that effect. I will give extracts from two of the letters I have from him because they bear on this. The first is from a letter in reply to one of mine urging him to take a little vacation, come to Chicago, meet some of our authors in intimate chat at a little luncheon I would arrange, be the guest of the Allied Arts Association at a dinner and meet more authors and artists, go to the theater, etc. He wrote:

> I wish you knew how unhappy it makes me to tell you how difficult it is to me to get over to Chicago, as you suggest. Two or three years ago I gave up public speaking entirely, as I found this was absolutely necessary to my literary work, and it really grieves me when I receive such pleasant invitations and must decline them. I know that I am sacrificing a great deal of personal pleasure when I put my work above such activities as these. To break in on myself even for a day or two when I am writing a novel has more than once knocked me out of a month's work. Other writers may be different, but I am

constituted just that way. I am wondering if you can understand the situation.

With all good wishes, I am,

Sincerely yours,
James Oliver Curwood

Yes, he actually signed his name in full to that letter — he had a way of signing only J O C, in his hurry. What follows is from a letter dated December 29, 1926:

> I have your dandy letter of the 23rd and want you to know that I am keeping this matter in mind. I have been so eternally busy since I last wrote you that when I had to leave my studio for a month in New York on business, things piled up pretty far ahead and I seem to be as far from having any time for myself as before. I couldn't possibly make it just now, but I am hoping that the day will come soon when there will be time for me to do something in this line.
>
> I would like nothing better than to be with you and am going to try hard to make this possible some time in the not distant future.

The time never came.

Peace and joy to his restless, driving, high-climbing soul!

I wonder if you know that on his father's side he was descended from Capt. Frederick Marryat? Never heard of Captain Marryat? How much you have missed! But you yet have time to enjoy some of the most entrancing fiction ever penned. Captain Marryat, who was born in England in 1792 and died in 1848, was of Huguenot stock (French) on his father's side, and his mother was a daughter of Frederick Geyer, of German descent, but a good citizen of Boston, U. S. A. He served for years in the British navy. Some of his principal characters are drawn from life. He wrote thirty-one volumes; every one great reading for a weary or lonesome or idle day. He spent 1837 and 1838 in Canada and the United States, and the result was "A Diary in America, with Remarks on Its Institutions," three volumes in 1839 and three more volumes, Part Second, the same year. The last eight years of his life he devoted to the writing of books for children.

There is something in heredity — you will find something of Captain Marryat in the books of James Oliver Curwood.

CLARA LOUISE BURNHAM

I COULD never understand just how and when Clara Louise Burnham found time to write her thirty novels in forty-five years while writing a goodly number of cantatas for her father, Dr. George F. Root, and many articles for magazines. Once she told me that she never worked in the summer. For two years my wife and I lived at the hotel which was her home for nearly twenty years — she was its first guest. We were separated by one suite only. Of course I saw Mrs. Burnham often; she was never hurried, apparently never pressed by her work. It seemed to me that if she were not a guest at some dinner she had guests to dinner at the hotel. Frequently after dinner she joined my wife and me on the mezzanine floor to listen to the fine music. She had no secretary. She did not use the typewriter. Once she spoke to me of the great manual labor of writing a book. She traveled a good deal. She had a large correspondence. Every day that she was at the hotel I heard her playing on her fine, old grand piano. She was a superior pianist. Our rooms were on the eleventh floor, looking south, with a fine view of Lake Michigan — the hotel was on the lake's shore — and of Jackson Park; and she sat often at her favorite window and enjoyed the lake and the trees and the park. Yet she wrote those thirty books, and more! Her notes to me reveal what was never revealed by her manner: that at times she was hurried. Her notes were always exceedingly interesting. I will give a paragraph from one:

> As the incarnation of pep I suppose you never come to the place where you wish everybody would forget you! I get there sometimes and am there now: my publishers wanting to know how many words there will be in my next book when I don't know myself, as it is not nearly finished; kind people and invitations pressing in on me from every side; and daily duties forcing me out every day into that indescribably cruel north wind. I am almost at the mental place of the child who came in crying the other day: "Nobody loves me. God hates me. Cats and dogs bark at me!" I am always grateful to you for your unfailing interest and friendliness. . . .

Mrs. Burnham loved dearly her home on Bailey Island, off the coast of Maine. There she spent her summers for years. She went to Bailey Island, as usual, in June 1929; and four days after she arrived on the island she died, quietly, without pain, ill only two hours — heart failure. Funeral services were in the chapel of Mt. Auburn Cemetery, Boston, June 24. Interment was in the cemetery at North Reading, Massachusetts, where rest the remains of her father and mother.

I quote from a letter:

> The Chicago papers had only a short paragraph announcing her death, whereas the New York *Times*, for example, had a full column. Of course the Boston and Portland papers had long articles.

CHAPTER XXX

CONCERNING CERTAIN AUTHORS

ALLAN NEVINS

IS A son of one of my teachers I mentioned in the chapter on The District School: the last teacher in the log schoolhouse and the first in the new schoolhouse; the well-educated man who was the first of my teachers to use good English and apparently the first of my teachers to have heard of English grammar — certainly the first that had any understanding of what English grammar was or meant.

Allan Nevins has in a truly remarkable degree all the qualities required of the historian. He exhibited those qualities in his first book, "The Life of Robert Rogers." He went to London to search in the British archives for the facts — proof of the conscientiousness and thoroughness of the young author. Every one of his volumes shows intelligent, tireless research; the true historian's evaluation of events and men; correct judgment in the selection of that which is worthy to be history and the rejection of that which is not; and a style that as well as the novelty of the subject and the originality of the statements gives freshness and vivid life to the page. As for that last, Nevins takes a new field and in it he digs until he has unearthed a thousand interesting facts of historical import and value; and if you would know how fascinating history can be made, read his books. Only I warn you that a Nevins book is not of the vest-pocket sort.

He is the author of fourteen volumes, written in fourteen years. But writing these books has been only a part — during some years the smaller part — of his work. For twenty years he has been one of the editors of some New York daily: the *Post,* or *Sun* or *Herald-Tribune,* and now the *World.* In addition he has written regularly for such periodicals as the *Nation* and the *Saturday Review of Literature.* He is now Professor of History at Columbia University; and before Columbia at Cornell. He has delivered lectures at universities a thousand miles or more from New York City, writing history and reading proof on the train.

HOMER CROY

I LIKE the notes I get from Homer Croy, originally of Marysville, Missouri. And here are the inscriptions he put on some of the envelopes:

THE GREAT
JOHN M. STAHL

COLONEL JOHN M. STAHL
MUCH PRESIDENT

JOHN M. STAHL
FARMER (JOHN M.) STAHL

JOHN M. STAHL,
Care Chief of Police
if you don't find him at home

On top of the letters from him is one dated "The Day You Went to Church," which in part reads:

> I went through your enterprising town, but merely changed trains and went on to Missouri to get some fried mush.
>
> I am sending you a copy of my new book. It is a solemn, ponderous affair — too intellectual ever to have any great burst of popularity. I am now through being a Serious Thinker, and am going to do lighter stories from now on. I am now up to my middle in a new one.
>
> *Yours till Jack Dempsey buys a book*

A paragraph from another, only date "Tuesday or Wednesday."

I expect to leave for Missouri election day and will want to stay in Missouri ten days or so to get acquainted with what the Middle West is thinking about and to see where I used to pull cuckleburrs. (I simply won't spell it with an o. The dictionary's wrong, that's all). So, can you have that meeting, or dinner, a few days after the tenth, or even a week, so I won't have to cut my Missouri time so short?

Yours until there is no work to do on the farm,
HOMER CROY

Postum:

I forgot to say that my wife has to stay at home, where women are now so seldom found.

I had been trying to dine him and his wife at the table of the Allied Arts Association, but he was always promising and dodging. But we corralled him, and he made the finest talk imaginable. It was a very literary, artistic assemblage and what interested us intensely in his speech was what he said about the low cost of living in that Volsteadless Southern France.

Another letter, only date

Sunday
About Church time

Dear President:

It was a great success. It was the best literary dinner I ever attended in my life. I was delighted with it and wish to goodness I didn't have to leap up from the table and dash away like a prominent bandit.

When I come to Chicago again, which will probably be in the Spring, I will send you word and then you and I can foregather and have a real, old-fashioned talk.

My new Paris book — They had to See Paris — will be out in April and I shall send you an autographed copy.

Yours for an early spring
HOMER CROY

He sent the book, cheerful prevaricator that he is at times, as when he wrote the first paragraph of the above letter.

In another letter Croy enclosed a clipping from the photogravure section of the New York *Times* showing " Homer

Croy Blowing His Own Horn in Switzerland. The Novelist, Who is at Work on a Story of Americans in Europe, with His Little Daughter Carol, Makes the Welkin Ring with a Pair of Alpen-Horns." Picture shows that the little daughter must take after her mother, which is fortunate for her. Picture indicates, however, that she got her beautiful abundant hair from her father. Anyhow, someone got it.

Homer Croy's letters reveal another thing: he is one of the most companionable, lovable persons that ever drew the breath of life and a check on a bank. If ever I am compelled to play Crusoe and can't have a female Friday I will hope to have a Friday just like Homer Croy. Life would never be dreary under any conditions provided one of these conditions was the presence of Homer Croy within communicable distance. If I had the naming of a boy I would name him Homer, for I have known three men named Homer and every one of them was the best preventive of or cure for the blues I have ever known. One of the three is Homer Guck, good life insurance man, banker, and better newspaper man, and I'll bet everyone connected with the paper in any capacity knows him and loves him. True, the other Homer was hanged about two years ago, but I am sure that was a mistake in his case. He said so himself.

Of Homer Croy's books, of course I liked "R.F.D. No. 3," because of its title; and it is one of the most relentless, dissective stories of farm life ever written. His "West of the Water Tower," it will be recalled, was published anonymously; and Fanny Butcher was the first to guess correctly who was the author.

ZONA GALE

SHE will always be Miss Zona Gale to the millions who have read the Friendship Village books or "Miss Lulu Bett" and they will not care a hang for any gentleman who by his name proclaims that he knows the insignificant fraction that designates the husband in the well-ordered household. And to those who know her she will always be an eminent example of Dauntless Courage and Neversaydie; and, yet better, of The Helpful Heart.

Elsewhere I have told of Zona Gale's kind, cheery words to little Marcia Masters. In 1925 she wrote me:

> How nice of you to remember, as I do, that happy meeting with Marcia Masters. And how good of you to have remembered that scrap of history of mine. Your impression is quite right. I had always written from the time I was in the grades. In fact, from the time I could print. But it was not until 1903 that I had a story accepted by a magazine which paid. I had had a few in Milwaukee papers from which I had received from three to seven dollars. Then I sold two to *Success* in 1903 for $125 apiece, and one to *Smart Set* in the same year for $65. But of course I had been doing newspaper work for which I was paid. And for two years previous to that I had been doing space on New York newspapers and on the staff of the *World*, with occasional articles for *Outing* and always verses. I had had verses accepted for a number of years before this — and poetry is what I would really rather have written than anything else.

I'll break in here to say that Gene Stratton Porter and Herbert Quick confessed the same thing to me about poetry. And a score more of successful prose writers. To resume Miss Gale's letter:

> I note that you ask about the length of the road until the first book was published. That would take it still farther — until 1906. And the first novel that I tried was when I was a junior in high school in 1890. I wrote two books and a novelette which were never printed at all. One, as I look back on it, in direct imitation of Crawford and another in just as close imitation of Mary Sherwood. And both Italian. It was not until I began to write about the places and people I knew that I had anything published at all. I am so interested in what you say of the activities of the Allied Arts Association. All good wishes to that work and you.

I give that letter to encourage the beginners with the pen. And for another reason; to justify the titles I gave Zona Gale at the beginning of what I have written about her. When she is adopted by those Wisconsin Indians so keenly interested in Midland authors, she will be given the name of Brave Heart, whatever that may be in the Indian tongue; or, better yet, and as I have indicated, The Helpful Heart.

June 17, 1922, she wrote me:

> The two days' meeting in Chicago sounds most interesting. I wonder if we can not in some way stress our favorite subject, namely, that the S. M. A. should undertake some definite work, either to establish a scholarship or to stretch out its hand in some way toward some specific creative effort. Could there not be a symposium of five or six of those asked to bring opinions on this subject? The establishment of a scholarship in the University of Chicago would be a simple matter or the establishment of a loan fund to students who shall give satisfactory evidence of unquestioned creative ability in literature. Perhaps a symposium hitting the nail several times on the head, with time for discussion afterward, and then the appointment of a committee to carry out anything that might be decided on, would crystallize this, and the October meeting would seem to be a wonderful time to do this.

She wrote several times about the scholarship. That proposed two days' meeting of authors and publishers was voted down. But can not there be done what Zona Gale proposed?

LEW SARETT

I HAVE watched Lew Sarett closely; have followed his production with unusual interest. His first book, "Many, Many Moons," seemed good to this farmer and tired business man; and it not only entertained and rested the tired farmer and business man, but it stimulated. The contents rang true. Then came, in 1922, "The Box of God," and to this hour I dip into very few books in my library as often as into that. Of course "Slow Smoke" (1925) is better, for Sarett is of those who grow and do better and better, and I should like "Slow Smoke" amazingly, and I do; but I like the "Box of God" better. Sarett wrote the Ode to Illinois read in 1924 at the dedication of the War Memorial Stadium at the University of Illinois. I was presiding at a dinner of the Society of Midland Authors when we got word that he had just been awarded the Helen Haire Levison prize for poetry and I had the honor of introducing him to the assembled authors as the prize-winner.

More than two years ago he retired to a county in Wisconsin that reaches to the north line of the state, that he might the better write. It took courage and wisdom to do that. I have reason to believe that before long a volume of poems and a novel will come from his workroom. In the meantime he lectures a good deal, before classes in Northwestern University, and more to delighted audiences from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

On rare occasions I hear from him. Not long ago something in a letter brought to mind that "Slow Smoke" was awarded the Poetry Society of America prize for the best volume of poetry published in America in 1925. It has gone through edition after edition and yet constantly grows in popularity. Braithwaite knows what he is talking about: he said in the Boston *Transcript* that "'Many, Many Moons' is by far the best book of Indian poems ever published." And Wayne Gard wrote that "with his third book, 'Slow Smoke,' Sarett reaches the front rank of American poets."

(There are almost no poets that are not very lovable. To be poets they must have in them and about them that which is attractive. I know of no other poet who can or could decline or refuse so graciously and effectually as Lew Sarett, except Amy Lowell. I will never believe that she was rude or said cuss words or acted nasty. I have from her as nice an array of notes as were ever written. Whatever may be the question about her poetry, there can be no doubt that she knew how to write prose — in a note.)

ALICE GERSTENBERG

As I start to type this page I have a vivid recollection of a girl, animated, alert, enthusiastic, quick to see and to execute, doing more than her part in first this and then that to have properly staged a one-act play with the happy title of "The Pot Boiler." This was on the South Side of Chicago, in a play-house on that short stretch of Fifty-Seventh Street that runs from the beauty of Jackson Park to the then repulsive ugliness of the east border of the Illinois Central railway right of way. For years that squalid stretch of one-story "shacks" that were and are fit reminders of the sordid side of the World's Fair, was the dwelling place of some two score or more people and the rendezvous of twice as many more who were artists or authors, or thought they were; and those that, because of ties of sanguinity or ties that with most of them were stronger, were of the entourage of these that were pleased to be called artists or authors. The name of the alert, enthusiastic girl I have mentioned is Alice Gerstenberg. She had written "The Pot Boiler."

At that time I knew her best as a novelist. I had read her "Unquenched Fire," published in 1921. Three years later appeared "The Conscience of Sarah Platt," another novel. Miss Gerstenberg's first book was not a novel, however. It was a collection of college plays for girls, written while she was a student at Bryn Mawr, I think; entitled, "A Little World." I am sure that always her natural bent was toward play writing rather than novel writing. She has a wonderful sense of the dramatic. In 1921 was published her second book of plays, which by its title told just what it was: "Ten One-Act Plays." Her third book of plays, "Four Plays for Four Women," appeared in 1924; and the next year was published "Opera Matinée," a one-act play.

I have not spoken of her very successful "Alice in Wonderland" dramatization produced in New York and Chicago. I might write of her other plays — the one-act "Dress Rehearsal," for an example — and she has written three-act plays; but we can probably best understand Miss Gerstenberg and what she has done and guess what she will do if we consider her "Overtones," produced by the Washington Square Players in New York in 1915. We will begin with this from the Chicago *Tribune* of January 31, 1926.

It is by Burns Mantle, in his regular letter from New York for the *Sunday Tribune,* and it was under the heading,

> BRINGING MASKS TO MODERN DRAMA
>
> Much of the discussion of the town concerns Eugene O'Neill's newest play, " The Great God Brown," which was done last week at the Greenwich Village Theater.
>
> It was not only his newest, but also his strangest, opus, representing an application of the Greek mask idea to modern drama. Herein the principal characters, or four of them at least, are literally two-faced. In their hands they carry their other selves, as it were, and by their masks you come to know them. It is the idea that Alice Gerstenberg used in the one act " Overtones," expanded to express the spiritual philosophy of its author.

O'Neill liked so well the idea of the real and masked character that he used it again in his " Strange Interlude." About this play Frederick Donaghey wrote in the *Chicago Tribune* of December 6, 1927:

> That the Theatre Guild of New York is serious about staging Eugene O'Neill's " Strange Interlude " is indicated by its announcing that Miss Fontanne, Tom Powers, and Earl Larrimore will be in the cast. . . . This is the play wherein Mr. O'Neill, thinking that he has hit upon a new device for unshackling drama from its conventions, has hit upon a device used more than ten years ago — and successfully — by Miss Alice Gerstenberg, of Chicago, in a brief piece named " Overtones." Miss Gerstenberg managed to put the notion across in twenty minutes; whereas Mr. O'Neill's play, which is in innumerable acts, requires for complete performing hours and hours.
>
> Pondering the difficulties entailed by this opus, I have hit upon a solution that I'm certain would overcome most of them; it is that we have it acted simultaneously in three or four theaters. Thus, one theater might be used for the actual dialogue; a second, for the audible thoughts of the characters; a third, for the changing of the settings; the fourth, for an oral explanation, by Mr. O'Neill of what is going on in the other theaters.

Miss Gerstenberg is original, and, as I have said, she has to a remarkable degree the dramatic sense, the dramatic perception. She is not only original in her ideas; she is dramatic and discerning in them; so much so that O'Neill is glad to make use of at least one brilliant example.

An authority has written that the one-act plays are not produced in vaudeville because "vaudeville producers are neither original nor courageous in their productions." To Miss Gerstenberg that was a challenge, not a discouragement. Through her insistent effort a Little Theatre play was presented, by the cast that had acted it in the Little Theatre, in a vaudeville theater, the Palace, in Chicago. The audience of that theater is known to be hypercritical. It was thought certain that its attitude toward the Little Theatre play would be more than that; it would be hostile. But the play was so successful that the Orpheum Circuit put it on in other houses. Through the kindness of Miss Gerstenberg my wife and I saw it produced in a near-North Side (Chicago) vaudeville house in August 1928. I do not think an audience could have been found that would subject any play of any merit to a harsher test. Not that they were competent critics, but a play of merit was so foreign to them and their playhouse experience. The play went over.

Miss Gerstenberg is co-founder with Miss Annette Washburn in 1921, and was director 1921–23, of the Chicago Junior League Theatre for Children; and which "has set the standard for all the Junior Leagues to follow." The Junior Leagues throughout the United States, with the cooperation of the Church and Drama League, are establishing theaters for children.

In 1922 Miss Gerstenberg originated the Playwrights' Theatre for the encouragement and development of playwrights and the production of new plays. It has continued to function successfully; it has taken deeper and deeper hold.

CHAPTER XXXI

A JOURNEY AMONG AUTHORS

THE PACIFIC COAST

I AM sure that I am fortunate in this: All I need for the most wonderful journeys is a bunch of railway timetables and another of folders about ocean vessels: and they cost nothing! The journeys I take with these and these only are the most delightful of journeys: all the unpleasant features of other journeys — slow trains, overcharging hotels, disagreeable people — I escape. Some hundred times I have thoroughly enjoyed an excursion among authors that took me to all on whom I desired to call. Every time I now make one of these delectable journeys I begin on the Pacific Coast and first of all I ring the doorbell of that poet and wit, Charles G. Blanden, just as my wife and daughter and I did on the first anniversary of the Blandens moving into their fine new home, from which one has such a wonderful view of mountain and ocean.

When I call on the Blandens I'll call also on Helen Bagg (who writes good books, but always under a nom de plume) and Zane Grey, and Peter B. Kyne, and Walt Mason, and Edgar Rice Burroughs, and S. H. M. Byers, and Rupert Hughes, and Upton Sinclair, and Chatfield-Taylor, and Gertrude Atherton, and Rose Hartwick Thorpe, and a hundred other authors, and I'll hope to find them at home, if they don't see me coming. But I can't call on George Sterling. And because I like it I will insert here a poem that émigré sent me, all in his own handwriting, and duly signed. He has written on the corner, "This may amuse you."

AMBER

"The bones of Agamemnon are a show!"
And only yesterday I held in hand
That fossil resin from the Baltic strand —
The Miocene in mimic afterglow;
And there, distinct from mandible to toe,
Perfect as on the day when last he crawled,
An iridescent beetle widely sprawled,
Caught in the golden gum so long ago.

On some fine morning of the perilled Past,
He had gone forth so bravely (say, alone
On his adventure), thorny and cuirassed,
Eager, perhaps, to win a scareb throne,
But found a fate not all unlike our own,
Whom custom's pale viscidities hold fast.

I prize very much a copy of Lilith, autographed thus:

For my friend
John M. Stahl,

This allegory of temptation,
with sincere well wishing.
George Sterling.

San Francisco, April 6, 1923.

LILIAN BELL

Nor can I call on Lilian Bell, whom I knew before she was an author although her first book appeared when she was in her teens. She died in Los Angeles in July 1929.

She was the author of twenty-five books. More than half were "best sellers." She helped much in the organization of the Society of Midland Authors. She did a great deal of war work and my wife often drove her from place to place. But not the day when it was several degrees below zero and my wife, one of those who drove her own car in war work, was kept waiting two hours in her car by a general who was making a social visit. Of course he did not go to France. I hope that he freezes slowly to death.

Lilian Bell's best work was not the writing of books. She thought of sending a ship with Christmas presents from the children of the United States to the World War orphans. With her to think was to act. She had unusual initiative and executive ability and measureless energy and courage. Her project of the Christmas Ship was heartily endorsed and aided by more than a thousand periodicals. It was supported by President Wilson, who named the Jason to be the Christmas Ship. As a result of the thought and energy and tireless direction of Lilian Bell, the children of America raised more than two million dollars in ten weeks and sent by the Jason more than seven million presents to the orphans of the warring countries; presents wisely distributed by the Red Cross. When the Jason arrived in Plymouth Harbor the British Admiralty accorded it honors never before accorded a foreign vessel. Because of it Lilian Bell was thanked by the Queens of England and Belgium and the Tzarina of Russia; and by millions of grateful children none the less thankful because they could send their thanks only by that radio of heart to heart.

ROSE HARTWICK THORPE

One of the curiosities of literature is that so many authors live because of one poem or story. Yes, of course: " Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard." S. M. H. Byers, for many years a resident of Iowa, now of Los Angeles, has written thirteen meritorious books, and he is known because he wrote " Sherman's March to the Sea," which also gave a name to a campaign. Another resident of Los Angeles has written good stuff — a dozen books — but she is known because of about the poorest of all she has written, if the critics and wits are right. She is Rose Hartwick Thorpe and she wrote " Curfew Must Not Ring Tonight." Of course I'll call on both Byers and Mrs. Thorpe. Rose Hartwick was a school girl midway in her teens when, in an Indiana school, she wrote the poem hurriedly, on her slate, the afternoon of

April 5, 1867, as America and the Star Spangled Banner and most of the favorite, truly sacred hymns were written: in the haste and fervor of intense feeling. The written word that from generation to generation dwells in the memory and hearts of men of all degrees comes from the heart rather than the brain. The girl, Rose Hartwick, misspelled more than one word, as she has not hesitated to bring to my attention — she has given me much information about the writing of the poem, and its corrections. But in the Fourth Canto (Sir John Murray has the manuscript) Byron wrote, "And dashest him again to earth — there let him lay." And in Sterne's "Sentimental Journey" you will find this: "There was just room for the parcel to lay between them." When they wrote these sentences both Byron and Sterne were older than was Rose Hartwick, and one was a graduate of Trinity College and the other of Oxford. English is full of pitfalls. The person who discovered or invented English spelling and English grammar was no friend of mankind.

On my way back from California I will call on

CHARLES M. SHELDON

of Topeka, who traveled five hundred miles and back again to "go on the air" for me. He is the greatest master, among American writers, of the didactic novel, and he has written the book that has had a much greater sale than any other book written by an American. The title of this book is "In His Steps."

As long ago as 1920 it was known positively that more than twenty-two million copies of this book had been sold! This did not include the sales of some piratical editions. Millions of copies have been sold since 1920. And the author has never received a cent of royalty on the copies sold except a very small royalty on the first edition of a few thousand.

The publisher of the first English edition of "In His Steps" testified that edition was three million copies.

"In His Steps" has been translated into French, German, Italian, Spanish, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, High Dutch, Russian, Armenian, Bulgarian, Welsh, Gaelic, Japanese, Bohemian, Greek, a dialect of Hindu in South India, Esperanto, and yet other languages.

Dr. Sheldon has written more than thirty successful books. I have found my meetings with him rich in instruction.

CHARLES J. FINGER

FROM Topeka I'll go down to Arkansas, because, for one thing, as I write there lies on my desk a little book entitled "The Choice of the Crowd." Twenty-one authors contributed to this book. The copy I have has the autographs of all of them. It is dedicated to Claude Meeker. It has his autograph. Think you could buy that little book? Pasted to the fly-leaf of this book is this letter signed by Charles J. Finger:

> Certainly it will be possible to have a copy of "The Choice of the Crowd" autographed by every author represented in it.
>
> Your book has gone on its way, and many a thousand miles it will travel before it reaches you again. It must take one trip to Europe and one to New Zealand, so that when you see it again it will not only have crossed and recrossed the States, but it will also have circumnavigated the globe.
>
> There was a fine touch of literary tragedy in your account of the burnt letters. I can match it, I think. When Reedy died his widow called in the ragman and sold the books in the office by the pound and they were autographed copies and all kinds of treasures.
>
> I have a letter today from Oxford, England, in which Edward J. O'Brien tells me that among the dozen best stories for 1922 he will reprint my "The Shame of Gold." Last year he reprinted "The Lizard God." Though I am inclined to believe that the weird adventure story interests some, I had thought that "My Friend Julio" was the best.

To get those autographs that book went twice to Australia. It went to New Zealand. It went around the globe. It traveled more than thirty-five thousand miles.

Finger referred to the accidental burning in 1922 of nearly all my letters from authors, statesmen, and other notables up to that date. Only a few escaped.

Finger's books are the farthest removed from dullness of any books I know. He has a dashing style and then he traveled in South America and Africa, hitting the most out-of-the-way places, the farthest removed from the routes of Cook's parties. For greater variety he served before the mast.

He was born on Christmas. Hard luck — one present for both days. But then I have a friend who was born on February 29.

THE REEDS

Likely on my travels, it may be in California or Canada or Florida, I will encounter Earl Reed and his wife, and the faithful automobile. There are two people who are true lovers of nature.

Earl's mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Armstrong Reed, was perhaps the brainiest woman ever resident of Chicago. Certainly she was recognized abroad as the deepest thinker of all those that have lived in that city. No other woman has ever been so honored by the Philosophical Society of Great Britain, of which she was by unanimous vote a member, and an honored one. She was proposed for membership by Max Müller and Sir Monier Williams. She was the only woman whose work was ever accepted by the Philosophical Society of Great Britain. She was also a member of the International Congress of Orientalists, of the Royal Asiatic Society, and of the Victoria Institute. She was a resident of Chicago until her death. Her first book is "Hindu Literature: or, The Ancient Books of India," published in 1891 — a monumental work given the highest praise abroad, but of course far beyond the appreciation of Chicago when published; and when the rest of the country condemned a Midland book because it was Midland. Her other books are "Persian Literature, Ancient and Modern," 1893; "Primitive Buddhism: Its Origin and Teachings," 1896; and "Hinduism in Europe and America," 1914. (She died June 16, 1915.)

Because of herself Chicago owes her much. It owes her more because she was the mother of Myrtle Reed McCullough, Earl H. Reed, and Charles B. Reed, all Chicago authors of note.

Myrtle Reed McCullough was one of the most widely read and popular of Chicago authors. She was the author of twelve highly successful novels at the time of her death in 1911 at the age of thirty-six.

Earl Howell Reed, etcher and author of the most interesting books, has done more to acquaint the public with all the mystery, beauty, and charm of the Lake Michigan Dune Country than any other person, except possibly, "the Painter of the Dunes," Frank H. Dudley, one of our great painters. It would be difficult to decide whether Earl Reed should be more famous as an etcher or as an author; therefore we will rejoice in his great and growing fame as both. The charm of his books is doubled by his artistic illustrations, the work of an artist with the needle who has developed new methods and because they are better than the old has not hesitated to use them. He has gained a unique technique that produces remarkable effects. Nowhere else will the characteristics of a person be found delineated in a black and white portrait, as in Earl Reed's illustrations of his books. Of all his books I like best his "Tales of a Vanishing River."

Herbert Quick discovered a characteristic of Earl Reed. I quote from one of his letters:

> I'm glad I don't live in Chicago. I shouldn't do a bit of work. You fellows are too entertaining. I had a good time there, largely because of your personal good offices. I thought everything went off beautifully, especially Mrs. Burnham's delightful little talk. It was a gem. But I don't like Earl Reed. He is too darned versatile. He takes one of my best stories, and on the spur of the moment improvises one out of it that knocks mine cold. But he writes good books; I'll have to say that for him.

GLENN WARD DRESBACH

"THE best poems of the season," said the *Chicago News,* speaking of his "Cliff Dwellings and Other Poems." "No more spontaneous and delightful verse," said the *New York Herald,* "has been written. He is a born poet." Such words of praise came from all parts of the country. But words of higher praise came from every state of the Union and from abroad when his "Star Dust and Stone," published in the fall of 1928, was read. Dresbach has grown steadily: each of his seven volumes of poems is better than its predecessor; and the first of all was good indeed. Says Braithwaite in his 1928 Anthology:

> Glenn Ward Dresbach, who, upon an already fine art, has imposed the magic quietude of a new vision of reality. The poems I have selected of Mr. Dresbach for inclusion here have a firmness of verbal texture shimmering with quiet but poignant music, that is characteristic of Robert Bridges' "Shorter Poems" at their best; what he adds is a vigor of inner perception, an implied virility of substance, which separates them wholly from that atmosphere of illusion which turns so much of the Englishman's verse into vague images crying their sweet melodies out of a melancholy heart.

I am very proud of a copy of "Star Dust and Stone," because one fourth of the dedication "To Four Friends" is to me; and because it is autographed to me "with affectionate regards and gratitude."

Dresbach is the poet of the country, of nature, the wind, the sky, the trees, the hills, the plain, the mesa, the mountains, and of the little flower, the roadside, the home, and love's deathless story.

He knows the toiler's lot. He knows hard work, of the hands and the brain. He is in sympathy with all men and women and children that lead honest, industrious lives; and he hopes that more and more of them, through his leading, may think less of the drudgery and see more of the poetical about them, the true and the beautiful, in the tree, in the corner of the field of corn or cotton, in the shabby, picturesque gray house in the street near the railway tracks, in the canon-like street with its hurry and vibration and mingled sounds and the strip of sky and cloud above or the blustering or furtive rain.

For not many have I as warm a feeling as for Glenn Ward Dresbach; and I know that he is my true, firm friend.

Of course I'll call on Glenn during my journey. This very hour I have received a letter from him, saying another volume of his poems will be published in New York next spring and that I must dine with him when in Chicago next week.

Dresbach is yet a young man. He is all energy. Of course, then, he is slender and lean. No man has a more animated face, in which are set black eyes that I have never caught slumbering, and his hair matches his eyes.

THEY WRITE FOR CHILDREN

He knew that wherever I might wander I would have Chicago on my trip. One reason for that is my wish to read the letters from their little readers received by certain authors there; Lucy Fitch Perkins, for example. Here is a sample letter — from Frances Worthington:

> I am a little girl seven years old. I have just read "The Irish Twins." I think it is the *most beautifulest book* in the world.

And a very short letter is from a very small child:

> Thank you for your book. I read it twelve times.

Mrs. Perkins writes about Twins; and of course some interesting letters come from real twins. Here is a letter dictated to their mother by the Dewson real twins:

> We are American twins. We are five years old. We love your Japanese Twins and your Dutch Twins, too. Mother has read them to us *a hundred times since Christmas.* We send you thanks and hugs and kisses and pats.

Such letters are received by Clara Kern Bayliss, who has written a dozen books for children. Also, she has written many articles for magazines on anthropology, natural science, and child welfare. She has a natural right to write about the Indians. She is a woman of great personal charm. I know less than a dozen whose conversation will make the hours go so rapidly. I am proud that Mrs. Bayliss is a friend of the Stahl family.

Next I'll read some of the letters received by Cornelia Baker, who, while writing books for children, has gained a place in the hearts of many thousand parents, by her books directly and because she has entertained the children; and she has a very secure place in the hearts of those who know her personally. She has lived in Chicago for more than fifty years. She is on the editorial staff of the *Daily News*. She is a quiet, unobtrusive member of the Society of Midland Authors and the Allied Arts Association and the Illinois Woman's Press Association. And there is good evidence that children, when reading her books, forget their troubles and the neglected errand and the torn trousers or frock and even the aching tooth.

No one gets more precious letters from the children than the two Donaheys. Mary Dickerson and William are certainly jolly and companionable people. Mary has written fourteen books that have made five million and more children happy, and she has others on the electric hot-plate. She has been president of the Illinois Woman's Press Association and gave me invitations to all its interesting meetings. She is an officer of other organizations and is the perfection of generosity and hustle.

So is William Donahey, otherwise Bill. He is both author and artist. His Teenie Weenie cartoons are among the best for children. To his credit are six of the big Teenie Weenie books. He has a brother who is a noted cartoonist and another who was governor of Ohio until he got tired of the job.

THE GARNETTS

I'LL have a long talk with Louise Ayres and Eugene Garnett, who so well understood what I wished to do for authors and artists. They never failed to speak a word of encouragement when opportunity offered, and it seemed to me that they saw to it that opportunity offered just when encouragement was most needed. Always they were my champions.

Mrs. Garnett is the author of a long list of one-act and three-act plays; has written the text for a number of oratorios (music by Henry Hadley) and also lyric-dramas — one of them won a thousand dollar prize; and has written the music for two volumes of songs by Dorothy Aldis. Her last book is fascinating prose. The title is "The Joyous Pretender."

And I'll see the famous gardens of

ANNE HIGGINSON SPICER

those gardens at Kenilworth that have an international fame. Mrs. Spicer is an artist in pottery and metal work and the author of four volumes of poetry. Nothing better has she written than her "Nancy Hanks Lullaby," read at an A.A.A. dinner, and printed in the *Ladies Home Journal,* with illustration by Truett Carter, in 1928. We all saw its beauty at once, especially as she read it perfectly and sang with sympathetic understanding, of course. I did not hesitate to say, when she had read it, how good it was. I said then and I say now that it will creep into books within twenty-five years and will be read as long as people like to read beautiful things about Abraham Lincoln and his mother.

Of course I'll call on

ELEANOR GRIDLEY

IN THE old, old church in the old, old town of Dives (not in a hot, hot climate, but) in Normandy are chiselled the names of those who sailed in the year 1066 for England with William the Conqueror and fought at Hastings. At the very top of the list is the name of an ancestor of Eleanor Gridley. The line of descent is plain and clearly recorded. It tells of knights and barons and gentlemen; and, in the New World since 1630, the prouder titles of pioneer and patriot, flowering into the perfect growth of democracy, into the cultured member of the uncommon class of the common people that Lincoln said God loved so well: a Gridley married to a Gridley by a Gridley — such is Mrs. Eleanor Gridley.

Eight-year-old Eleanor Gridley, holding the hand of her father, Judge Gridley, of Jackson, Michigan, was at the birth of the Republican party in the grove in 1854.

In the early part of 1891, she, then secretary of the Lincoln Log Cabin Association, was sent by that Association to gather material for a book about Lincoln. She lived for weeks in the home of John J. Hall, cousin of Lincoln, who was brought by the Lincoln family from Indiana; was reared in their home; and only a few months before had moved from the log cabin, nearby, in which he had lived nearly all his life and which had been built by Abraham Lincoln and his father in 1831, and in which lived the father and the stepmother of Abraham until they died.

She spent much time in this old cabin and talked with the relatives and with scores of others that had known the Lincolns. From that resulted her book, "The Story of Abraham Lincoln." It was published more than thirty years ago, but the interest in it does not die. The last edition came out in 1925.

She has told the story of the real Lincoln and his mother to more than a million youth; and to the inmates of penitentiaries and jails and hospitals and "homes" of the orphaned and crippled, always without pay.

ALICE FRENCH ("OCTAVE THANET")

I'LL go to Davenport, Iowa, and see "Octave Thanet." She is of heroic stuff and for years has been winning a valiant fight for health. Not one person in a hundred thousand has the courage she has shown — jolly, mischievous, dignified, patrician, lovable Octave Thanet. You know she took that nom de plume because Octave was the name of her dearest girl chum and she saw Thanet written on a box car and liked it. She was the pioneer in writing of the common people of the Midland and especially the work people of the industrial towns. She dignified the people of toil by showing that they, too, had souls; that they, too, loved and suffered and sacrificed; that true nobility may be under coarse garments and be expressed in illiterate speech.

Her "Knitters in the Sun" appeared in 1887. Hamlin Garland's "Main Travelled Roads" did not begin until 1890 and his first book was published in 1891. He was not a follower, but Octave Thanet was a leader, the pioneer.

I have never received a letter from her that was not more than interesting. She is a generous letter writer. Of her letters I like best one, for the reason that in it appears this:

> Do excuse that blot. The wretched thing just jumped on me, and I had invested so much writing already I could not bear to start afresh.

Of Octave Thanet's books I like best "Stories of a Western Town," and of those stories I like best the one about Kurt Lieders, of whom his wife said, "There ain't nowhere a better man than my man Kurt, he always buys a whole ham and a whole barrel of flour, and never less than a dollar of sugar at a time. And he never gits drunk and he never gives me any bad talk." When she goes to plead for that model husband, to get his job back, "She wore the garb of ceremony, a black alpaca gown, with a white crochetted collar neatly turned over the long broad-cloth cloak in which she had taken pride for the last five years; and her quilted black silk bonnet was on her gray head. When she put up her foot to don her warm overshoes Kurt saw that the stout ankles were encased in white stockings. This was the last touch."

Octave Thanet's fifteen books have been translated into French, German, Spanish, Russian, Swedish, Italian, and Japanese.

MARGARET HILL MCCARTER

Last of all on this trip, I'll go back to Topeka, and call on Margaret Hill McCarter. She has a way of doing what she wishes to do, regardless of distance or anything else. For example —

It was scarce twenty years ago. The National Federation of Woman's Clubs was in session in St. Paul. A woman whose name was on the program came to the front of the platform to speak. Clearly she was a woman of culture and refinement, and modest and retiring, yet she surprised all and shocked some by the boldness of her utterance. Her address was all the greater surprise because it was known that she had from more than one college the honorary degree of Doctor of Literature; that she had other honorary degrees; that she was the author of widely selling books; that she was the mother of three children. She spoke well. She was an accomplished speaker. From the beginning she had the close attention of her audience — the audience she astonished, amazed; for she actually spoke for the ballot for women — woman suffrage equal to man suffrage.

It was the first time the ballot for woman had ever been presented to the National Federation of Woman's Clubs.

She has written fifteen successful books, mostly novels.

They have been translated into many foreign languages, and are read around the globe.

One of them, "The Peace of the Solomon Valley," went into five editions within three months. It is read in every nook of the earth to which reading man has penetrated.

Her books are about plain, everyday people, and are plain everyday language.

A physician in a New York City hospital has given "The Peace of the Solomon Valley" to more than two thousand convalescents to read.

THE LAST PAGES

For many years I have realized the wicked stubbornness of inanimate things. Until now I have thought that the saddest example of this is the positive refusal of a one dollar bill to become a five dollar bill. But now I know that the saddest example is the number of words a page will hold.

If a man presumes to write about himself he must think that the conditions that molded his life and some of the things which he has done and others in the doing of which he has participated are of historic value and will be of interest to others; and this involves writing about those with whom he has been glad to associate, those whom he has admired, and those whom he believes he is justified in calling his friends.

I would like much to write at length of the hundreds of good men and true friends whom I met in my business life; like John L. Hopkins, true friend indeed, and James I. Leach, the stoutest hearted man I have ever known, and none more tender or true. Especially I have in mind advertising managers and those connected with advertising agencies — brainy, honorable men indeed. Also, I have much wished to write of some that in my offices grew from office boy to men of unusual business ability. And some women also, notably Miss A. L. Stoddard, whom I will always gratefully remember because of the advice she gave a young man from the West, which, in 1883, was very different from New York City. May she live to read this; and live many years beyond that!

I wished to write at length of such as Edith Franklin Wyatt, who has made such a worthy contribution to Midland literature. I have met only four or five authors so thoroughly cultured and so delightfully lacking in apparent consciousness of it. No one encouraged me more when I wished to organize the authors of the Midland. And I wished to write of Vincent Starrett, poet and novelist, refined and learned and gracious. And of — but that piece of paper called a page is defiant and cruel.

When I set myself to write about authors and artists I thought I had set myself a pleasant task. And again I have found that few tasks there be that have no alloy of limitation or disappointment! I could write of only a limited number, not always those whom I admire or love the most, but those who have been pioneers or of unusual significance in the development of Midland literature and art — a development which is much worthy accomplishment; but is far more the basis of a lively hope of better, more distinctively American, production of pen and pencil, brush and chisel, and in music and architecture, that clings fast to all the beauty of the past while capturing new lines and tints and notes worthy of a New World.

So many that should have place between the covers of this book, space to tell of them and what they have done and what they have been to me, must scarce be mentioned and oftener be not mentioned at all, that I can not cast away the hope that some day my design and strength may equal my desire to write about them. But now I can only hope that the mystic waves, immeasurably more subtle and far reaching than those of the radio, of which our knowledge is sure although it is half faith, that somehow speak from mind and heart to mind and heart, will say to every one of those I now think of and can only think of, that none the less have they my esteem and none the less do I acknowledge their influence in molding me and my life.

CHAPTER XXXII

I GAZE AT THE PAST AND GLANCE AT THE FUTURE

MY FIELD OF OBSERVATION

DURING the sixty-five years of my distinct remembrance things once new have grown old and have passed out of the life of our people, while things undreamed of have come into the daily life and of them some are already unknown to the young. In this day of widely diffused knowledge there is little need that I write of material things as such; but it will be well to note some of the changes wrought in the life of that Midland in which all my active life was rooted. That life spans a revolution in the thoughts and sentiments, the industrial and social conditions, the ideals and ambitions, of the Midland people. This revolution has had a deep and wide influence on the people of every other part of the United States. For an instance, the ideas of Abraham Lincoln and of Stephen A. Douglas, who were so thoroughly of that part of the Midland that centered in west-central Illinois, were in the late sixties and the seventies, as they had been earlier, among the most active influences on thought and action from coast to coast, from Canada to the Gulf. They helped to mold the economic, social, and political systems of every part of our country. For a later instance, that revolution gave birth to Midland literature; and during the past quarter of a century a majority of the most successful authors residing in the East and the far West have come from the Midland — today Midland authors, residing on the coast of Maine and Massachusetts and California, in New York City and other cities outside the Midland, are responsible for the dominating literary force of the territory that bounds the Midland on either side.

I was fortunate in this, that my youth could not have been in any other locality so favorable to the study of the people of not only the nineteenth century Midland, but of the nineteenth century United States as well. In no other part of our country were there ever assembled so many elements of the population of the United States as in the west-central Illinois mixing-sieve. Among our neighbors were settlers from every Gulf and Atlantic Coast state but two and from all the states that lay between them and Illinois; and from the British Isles and five countries of continental Europe. Some of the settlers I knew were born in the eighteenth century; a few during or even before the War of the Revolution. One of my boyhood diversions, much enjoyed, was to accompany my father to the blacksmith shop. There nearly always I saw Henry Reynolds, Sr., the father of the smith, an old man indeed, who had made axes and shovels and forks and hoes at his forge in Connecticut, and, loading them and his anvil and blacksmith tools on a one-horse cart, had walked all the way to Illinois. His wife accompanied him; sometimes taking a short rest on the cart, but walking fully four fifths of the way. Occasionally he sold one of the implements he had made; but nearly all the cost of the long journey he paid by setting up a roadside forge. I saw this old couple after they were both more than a hundred years old. They were born in the early 1770s. The old man often talked to me while his son sharpened the plowshares; telling me about the Connecticut he left, about the long journey, the wild animals that had prowled where I was sitting, and the way people had to live for years after he had built his log cabin on the creek in the woods.

It will be seen that I had not only an unusual opportunity, but doubtless one not equalled elsewhere, to study and note the changes in the opinions, sentiments, customs, social usages, and religious and political beliefs of the people of all parts of the United States as they had existed during the thirty years of active settlement of western Illinois; and more than that, not only covering very nearly all the settled part of our country, but through the long stretch of a hundred years in parts of it.

The majority of the settlers of west-central Illinois, as well as of the part of the state to the south and east of it, were from the South. Nearly all of the settlers from the South were of the "poor white" class: illiterate, ignorant of the common school and an educated ministry, and indifferent to freedom of thought, speech, or press. Yet they were violently opposed to any opinions or sentiments that were not the same as theirs, and to the expression of such opinions.

The Easterners, nearly all well educated, many of them university graduates, believed in the free school, free speech, free press, and an educated ministry.

In ideas, sentiments, customs, and beliefs the Southerners and the Easterners were two opposing forces.

SCHOOLS AND SLAVERY

WHEN the poor white Southern settler reached Illinois he knew nothing of the free common school and he cared no more. His ideas of schools and education were crude indeed. Before he had been a settler twenty-five years, often before he had been in his new home ten years, he was more eager than his Easterner neighbor that his children should have good schools and teachers. Easy to see that inasmuch as the Southerners were a majority of the people the revolution in their ideas about and attitude toward the free school was of importance. It had far reaching effect. Of the seven outstanding advocates of free schools among the settlers of Illinois, three were from the South.

The condition of the poor white in the South was pitiable. There was no manufacture in the South. The work in the fields was best done by slaves from Africa. The poor white was lower industrially and economically than the slave. The slaves spoke deridingly of "the poor white trash." Starvation was just outside the pole cabin of the poor white. He hated slavery, which was so cruel to him. He hated both the slave-owner and the slave, for both oppressed him industrially. Yet he looked to the slaveholder for guidance in some things, and while he was opposed to slavery in his new home, he believed that the North had no right to end it in the South. The Southerners had strong ties of family or friendship to some left in the South; hence while they were against slavery in Illinois, they were easily stirred to bitter resentment by the harsh utterances of the Garrisons.

The election in Illinois on the first Monday of August 1824, was bitterly contested for eighteen months with the use of every known campaign device. The old settlers never tired of telling me about it. More than ninety percent of those who voted were "original settlers." "A large majority of the voters in the state were immigrants from the South." It was the first time the pro-slavery and the anti-slavery forces had come to grips after the Missouri Compromise. "The close of the Missouri controversy was the signal for renewing with energy the struggle to establish slavery in Illinois. The pro-slavery men expected an easy victory." They did not know the feeling of the poor white settler. Slavery was defeated by an overwhelming majority. This was true even in "Egypt," where four fifths of the voters were from the South.

If the vote had been to abolish slavery, ninety-eight percent of the Southerners would have voted against it. The sons of these original settlers from the South fought under Logan and Grant and MacPherson and Sherman — for the Union; not to abolish slavery until Lincoln, the Southerner, Illinois settler with four generations of the East reaching back to Massachusetts Bay Colony behind him, led the way.

The Easterners were nearly all opposed to slavery; directly opposed, under the leadership of Birney rather than of Garrison and his like.

The mixing-sieve has done well its work. In my youth the Easterners and the Southerners were widely, directly different, although they lived side by side in western Illinois. Today there is no South or East, no North or West, in western Illinois; and as is that section so is the rest of our country. Not everywhere to the same degree, but those parts the least on the way are moving fast. Almost everywhere is the free school, the educated ministry, free speech, and a free press. The North Carolina professor, true patriot he, is right: the South lags in its schools, in its buying of books, in its libraries. But to the losses of a losing war was added the burden of carpetbag rule. The spirit is willing and much is being done. Louisiana and Florida — all the Southern states are moved by the spirit of the Southern settler when he had been well domiciled in western Illinois. And the strongest sentiment and most vigorous effort against free speech and free press are in Boston!

CHANGES IN FARM LIFE

WHEN ~~Illinois was~~ settled it was yet the age of tools in farming. It was largely so when I was first set to work in the fields. Now it is the age of machinery in agriculture. A great good has been wrought; the productivity of man's labor in the field has been multiplied; but machinery can not well be employed in the growing of flowers in the dooryard or of vegetables and small fruits within easy distance of the farmhouse. In my youth there was keen rivalry among rural people to have beautiful dooryards. A dollar was much larger then than it is now; yet many thousands of dollars were sent to such seedsmen as Vick for seeds of flowers after hours of careful study and animated discussion of the pictures and reading matter in the catalogue. I remember how boastful were my family and our neighbors about the number and colors of our dahlias and "gladiolases" (we pronounced the plural as written and put the accent on the *glad*) and even more we boasted about the earliest spring and summer flowers, as we did about having the earliest radishes and "mess of peas" or "pot of early potatoes." Perhaps the crowning competition among the families was in "getting off the nest" the first proud, clucking, fussy hen with her nimble, downy brood. Specialized farming may be the most profitable in dollars and cents; perhaps the twenty thousand egg incubator in the hatchery and the big poultry farm are a gain in economy; but I regret that nowadays I must drive miles to find any competition whatever among the farmer families in poultry raising or gardening or fruit growing. I know that the clucking, cackling hens and the proud roosters and the chirping chicks on the farm of bygone years were a good in so many ways that their paucity now is proof of a real loss: possibly not a loss in money, but certainly a much more important loss in the spirit that gives life to work and puts so much happiness into life. Nor can I be reconciled to the bare dooryard one sees oftener than otherwise in the country nowadays; a majority not only bare but frowzy and unkempt and foul. When I am told that these dooryards are due to the growth of the tenant system I am not convinced. There is a stronger reason. It is not industrial or economic; it is spiritual.

The old dooryard flowers — the lilac at the gate and the honeysuckle at the porch — are only memories! Some of the old things that are of only the past would better have been held fast. The dooryard flowers and some of the other material things of their day were symbols of fine and noble spiritual elements of a life richly worth living although the dwelling might be of logs and the clothing be of rough homemade cloth.

I see it frequently stated that the automobile and the good roads have increased the social enjoyments of farm people. From two hundred platforms I claimed that good roads would do that; and now I know that I was wrong. Most assuredly I would not bring back the dirt roads, and dirt roads only, and the heavy farm wagon with an occasional "spring wagon"; but while there was probably less excitement and certainly there was less expense in the social life of farm people fifty or more years ago, there was more satisfying enjoyment. I observe the performers — that is the proper word — in the dances of today and I remember the dances and " fiddle tunes " of old times, all the way from " Dan Tucker " to the minuet (yes, a good many west-central Illinois people knew how to dance the minuet in settler days and later) and I know that the dancer of today might well envy the dancer of fifty years ago. People waltzed then, and there is no other dance so worthy to be called the poetry of motion. What a loud chorus of hearty laughter greets my assertion that compared with the social " functions " of today the greater social enjoyment was found in the spelling matches and debating societies and corn huskings and sausage makings! Worst of all, I stand up and proclaim that the " play parties " were better than the night clubs, and that I pity the young man who does not know the joy of "going to postoffice," the postmistress being a pretty girl full of mischief; or of playing " the miller "; or of " wading the swamp " in the laborious effort to catch and kiss the prettiest girl in the room — in his eyes. And I am right about all this! Every old timer knows I am! A life mate is the one great objective of the social activities of the young. When the settlers went to parties they may have carried their coarse shoes to near the place of the party and then put them on; but truer life mates, more warm hearted, more faithful, were in the log cabin homes. Hard conditions in truth tried the man and woman, yet divorces were unknown.

For a time the radio brought rural people together. That was when only a few farm homes had a set and the radio was yet a novelty. Then the neighbors came in to inspect and hear. Nowadays the radio lessens the coming together of the rural people. Instead of going where other families assembled to hear music or a speech, the farm family listens to the radio at home. There was a time when the farm people gathered in the home that had a melodeon, later the "cottage organ" or "parlor organ." The music may not have been classical or faultlessly rendered; but the old hymns rang out on the night air clear and triumphantly as they had in "family worship" and church services for so many years, sometimes with all the fervor of the revival, almost as if challenging the stars; and there were sung also the old love songs, beginning or ending with that greatest of all love songs, Annie Laurie —

Her face it is the fairest
  That e'er the sun shone on.

Out of these gatherings came keener and deeper emotions and sentiments, and truer, richer enjoyment than come to the rural people now, although they have the movie theatre and drive to it in a six-cylinder.

I have heard mourned the passing of this thing or that of the past; even the bootjack and the crane. I most regret the going of the melodeon and the fiddle. (There is a wide difference between the violin and the fiddle! Not in the wood and string, but in the spirit that dwells with them.)

After driving some three thousand miles in Michigan I am of opinion that there are now in that good state no more than one half as many country and village churches as there were twenty-five years ago. I have seen statistics to sustain that opinion. With better roads and the automobiles there is not need of nearly so many rural churches. It is better to have fewer and better ministers and better music, just as it is better to have the consolidated schools. But the movement has gone too far as regards the country church. Some large districts have no church at all. We have become very wise, we know a great deal, we are continually mastering matter yet farther, but there is yet need, and there will always be need, of religion, that cry of the soul to Mystery. And the only stable government, I care not what may be its form, must rest on an active, compelling sense of personal responsibility for conduct that is right and just; and to teach and urge such conduct is the especial province of the church. Nor is the opportunity for social contacts and enjoyments afforded by the country church to be taken lightly. I think I know of the advantages of the farm family's listening to the church services in a city church that can boast of the best preacher and choir and the most style; but I am glad whenever I think that I gave "the push over" to the project of equipping a large hall in a small Michigan village with a specially made radio set and loud speakers and amplifiers, permitting the people of a wide territory who had no church services whatever to gather in this hall and listen to services in churches in Detroit and Chicago and other cities; in a Baptist church one Sunday and a Methodist the next and then a Presbyterian and so on. And I rejoice exceedingly that if the congregation had not known the sect or denomination of the church they could not have distinguished it from the others by the sermon or the music or any other feature of the services.

Michigan has much company in the loss of rural churches. There is a hint for many in the foregoing. There were so many desirable results from the gathering together of farm people to worship God — and Almighty God was no lifeless abstraction — that surely they should at least equip the church building or a hall with the required radio contrivances and gather together each Sunday morning to listen to some church service and discuss the crops and the candidates and the tariff and the babies and, let us hope, the old dooryard flowers and the raspberry patches and who really had the first dish of peas. That will be richly worth while, although there will be one sad loss — the old country preacher, who was ignorant of fine diction, but was such a stay in time of trial, such a comfort in time of sickness and death, and on whose furrowed face was such radiant beauty when there were revealed to him all the beauty and glory set down by one whose eyes also were opened, on an island then named Patmos.

THE CONQUEST OF THE AIR

THE radio is the marvel of marvels. That the mysterious thing called sound should travel in all directions for thousands of miles — for all we know it may be billions — and be heard by man, is a fact that to the thoughtful may be all of appalling. That people anywhere on earth who provide themselves with some wire and tubes and other gimcracks may hear a whisper or a sob thousands of miles away is the greatest marvel and mystery of — how many years? and will have a more far reaching effect than anything man has discovered or invented in all those years — except the things with which he has made conquest of the air.

No remembrance of the days I spent in Quincy, Illinois, is more distinct than that of seeing Tom Baldwin, Quincy youth known to almost every resident of the city, ascend in a balloon to a height of more than two thousand feet and then, casting away from the balloon, shoot like a stick for hundreds of feet until the parachute strapped to him slowly and then more rapidly opened out and he came more slowly and yet more slowly until he landed safely on the ground. He landed, as he had planned, on the fair grounds once owned by the General Singleton who unwittingly showed me how farmers could influence Congressmen.

Baldwin was a "high wire performer." One day he brushed his napkin from the table and he observed that it spread out and floated slowly to the floor. An idea came to him: if he could make an umbrella big and strong enough he could go up in a balloon and drop to earth, with this big balloon to break the fall, without injury; and in this there would be more thrill and money than in performing on a high wire. He made such an umbrella, or parachute, as he thought would answer his purpose and fastened to it a bag of sand of a little more than his weight. These he fastened to a balloon and ascended a thousand feet and then cut them loose. The parachute opened as he hoped and believed, but this experiment and others showed him that he must ascend at least two thousand feet before he cut loose the parachute strapped to him. Baldwin went around the earth, making parachute jumps. But more important than that was the knowledge he gained of balloons.

Others made parachute jumps. Others learned about balloons. The parachute jumps and balloon races caused people to think and talk more about a balloon that could be guided through the air and about a machine that would carry a man through the air. Whenever the papers published something about Tom Baldwin — he was never Mr. Thomas Baldwin in Quincy — or about some other balloonist, the score of cronies who made their headquarters in the barber shop and the cigar store under my offices would talk about contrivances that would allow a man to go through the air as he went over land and water. Nearly all were skeptics devoid of hope. Such talk as theirs was not confined to Quincy. While others were thinking, at least, Dumont and Langley were thinking and experimenting. We know the results of their work and of the two young men who would not be preachers.

A man sixty-nine years old can not reasonably expect to live much more than thirty years longer, although much more surprising things have come to pass of late than someone finding how to stop the hardening of arteries and the degeneration of cells. But the life expectancy tables give me yet enough years that I may be sure that before I am gathered to my fathers I will be able to go from New York to Paris in seven hours; perhaps in less than five hours, as predicted by Blériot. That prediction of 750 miles an hour by the first man to fly the English Channel is not nearly so improbable of fulfillment as would have been the prediction in 1912 that in seven years Alcock and Brown would make a non-stop flight from Newfoundland to Ireland or that in fifteen years Lindbergh would fly the 3,610 miles from New York to Paris in 33 hours, 29 minutes, or in any time. As this is written, man has just flown at the rate of six miles a minute — 512 feet each second.

The airplane is following the same course as the automobile has followed. Some will remember when Thomas sent his automobile around the world. I remember the first "Cobe race" of automobiles; on a dirt track near Chicago. There were automobile stunts and the number of accidents to be expected. I remember when the speed limit of automobiles was raised to fifteen miles on the boulevards of Chicago. Many people were very angry: no pedestrian would be safe. Before the middle of this century the airplane will be as common and as much used as the automobile is now. It will be speedier than the automobile as that is speedier than the surrey with a spanking team and as that was speedier than the ox cart. The airplane will need no tracks and will occupy little ground, hence it will be not only the fastest but the most economical means of transportation — until man devises faster and cheaper; perhaps by releasing and harnessing a new force.

The airplane will make all men neighbors. Hence it will exert a great economic force; but the spiritual force it will exert will prove more important. If Henry Ford had begun operations one hundred years earlier there would not have been the war between the states. The airplane will banish war, not because it will make war too speedy and deadly, but because the common people, who are the sufferers from war, will know one another.

Man will be rapidly attracted to the use of the air for transportation because there is much more of thrill and romance and appeal to the imagination, much more of poetry, in flying than in any other way of locomotion. Free, aspiring man has not looked on the fish or the reptile or the beast, but on the bird, with envy. Up to the time of the airplane man's inventions only bound him more to the earth. But the airplane proclaims freedom — free as the bird; and that material freedom is insignificant compared with the freedom of the spirit that will be engendered. Romance and poetry there is in the race, run by man or horse; romance and poetry there is about ships, for they speak of daring and determination; but yet greater romance and poetry there will be by far about the winged ships of the air that symbolize so much more of discovery and daring and achievement. The airplane has already lent itself to poetry, and will continue increasingly to do so. The novelist will be able, with the airplane, to use such plots as have never been dreamed of. The airplane will make the author of the mystery story a hundred times more daring and capable. What tales of love, adventure, and mystery can be woven in the sky! New themes there will be by the score for the essayist. The painter and the sculptor will gain as will the author. Imagination will be stirred by the feats of the men of the air, by all the romance of man's flying, and its fancies will find form in prose and verse, in paintings and sculptures, and, perhaps most gloriously of all, in music. The drone of the motors, the singing of the cables, will be the birth of new scores, of yet more moving symphonies, of yet more exalting cantatas, of oratorios that most lift up the soul of man to his Maker.

THE HYPOCRITE

TODAY I went to the weekly gathering of the Kiwanis in a little New York town with a man who had been a building contractor for thirty years. He has found life worth while; he is far from being at all embittered; yet he bemoaned the passing of honesty among men. I know that many will say that he is right in his assertion that men are not so honest as they were fifty years ago. I have been fortunate indeed in those with whom I came in contact in business, especially publishers and those who were concerned in various ways with advertising; and it seems to me that the number of business men who will be guilty of dishonesty to gain money or position has been a growing percentage. I know that this is true among those not occupying the places of the greater responsibility. And I am told by those who should know that workmen are not so conscientious about their work as they were in years past. I make allowance for the disposition of mankind to belittle the virtues of the present, yet I am sure that we have lost in honesty.

We have also lost in law observance. I say that, although I know that a growing contempt for law was the subject of one of the earliest addresses made by Abraham Lincoln and that one can scarcely find a decade of our history when loss of respect for the laws was not a live subject in the opinion of many. It is apparent that one reason for the present disrespect for laws is the successful effort of brainy lawyers to thwart the operation of the laws. Those guilty of murder and other serious crimes are not made to begin the punishment for their crimes until years after the crime is committed; and often they escape punishment altogether. The impotency of the courts is the greatest surface reason for the contempt of law which results in much lawlessness; but beneath all the surface reasons is the cause of it all: hypocrisy.

There could not be more than a very little hypocrisy among the settlers, for conditions were such that a man could not long hide what he did or what he was. He could not use church membership to cloak rascality. He might pray loud and long and give wonderful "testimony" in class-meeting, but his neighbors knew if he tried to give short measure or if he slandered his friend or refused to pay an honest debt. The settlers and those that came just after them might not bother much with lawyers; they might often be ignorant of the printed law, but they heartily believed, as it was later expressed in a famous trial, that "the Law is Commonsense"; and while their methods of administering the law might be crude, the guilty did not escape because of technicalities — trial and punishment were speedy and sure. All this not only directly increased the respect for law, but indirectly it had this effect to a greater degree, for it made hypocrisy as little profitable as it was practically impossible. The guilty were sure to be known. They were sure to be punished.

I do not say whether it is for the better or the worse, although I have a strong opinion about it — that opinion is not of importance right here; but no intelligent person will deny that religion has much less to do with the conduct of the people than it had half a century ago. The church has lost its hold. There is disrespect for religion as there is for law. Some of the things held sacred by our parents and grandparents are now flouted; and this is not good for man and much more is it not good for woman. Not scientific research, not the discoveries of the chemist, not any greater knowledge of material things, are responsible for this. Such knowledge does not quench the yearning, the silent outcry, of the soul. Rather does it increase the groping for spiritual satisfaction. The hypocrite in the church is destroying the church. The hypocrite is responsible for that contempt of religion that is as serious as the contempt for man-made laws. One has need to talk to not more than a hundred people, taking the just quota of young people, to know that the hypocrite is, far more than all other causes, responsible for the growth of those things in the life of our people that give concern to the most conservative of the observant and thoughtful.

The archenemy of mankind is yet the hypocrite.

The surviving settlers have the truest conception of the hypocrite and his influence, for they remember when he was always known, and his influence could be determined. Not so long ago I met in a county-seat town of western Indiana a vigorous man all of eighty years old, I am sure. He showed that his life had been one of labor, yet, while his shoulders were bent, he held his head upright. A prominent farmer was being tried for the alleged stealing of some hens. I know of no other people who get so much enjoyment out of a legal show as those of Indiana. The men I wished to see were listening to the trial and I waited on the steps of the courthouse until court adjourned. The old man came down the steps, looked at me sharply, and then sat down on the step near me, and spoke in a friendly way. We talked; and we soon found that we both knew a good many people. The old man spoke of the hypocrisy of the man being tried, if he were guilty. Then he spoke of there being so many hypocrites and he mentioned particularly one that the newspaper dispatches had spoken of as a "church pillar sent to the penitentiary for the rape of a fourteen year old girl in his employ." (Since then this church pillar was pardoned; and it was found that previously his two brothers had paid hard cash for a large block of stock in the company of the chairman of the state Republican committee, which stock was, it later developed, of little, if any, value.) The old settler told me that such men as this church pillar reminded him of a diseased rat, blind, its body covered with festering, stinking sores, that he had once seen just dragging itself along, leaving excreta and pus behind it. He mentioned "another of these putrid pharisees," as he called him, who had basely betrayed the trust put in him by a friend, the president of a company, to elect directors who then elected the pharisee president of the company. And, what angered the old man almost beyond his ability to express, the "pharisee," in his first letter as president to the stockholders of the company, told what he had thought about in Sunday-school and church the previous Sunday, thus exhibiting his so-called religion in true hypocrite style. The old man said it was the pharisees who were responsible for the immorality and crime and betrayal of private and public trust and the dishonesty in business and in high places, and the contempt for decency and morality and religion. I am so sure he was right; I am so sure of the great danger in the wide existence of pharisaism; I am so sure that the greatest danger to all that is finest and best in our institutions and life is the hypocrite; that I wish my last word to be in condemnation of the hypocrite, especially of the pharisee who makes religion the instrument and cover of his despicable wickedness.

No, not quite my last word. That would be unfair to the progress I have witnessed.

ALL'S RIGHT WITH THE WORLD

I WOULD end this story of the growth of the West that has become the Midland and of the life I lived in and with it, with words of the good that has been gained and of hope that has a bedrock foundation of the things I have seen come to pass.

The world has moved; and toward that which is finer and better. Within the past one hundred years all the world was content with slavery. It now exists in only small, isolated spots. There is yet much to do to secure the right education of every child; but within the span of my life more has been done than in all the years of all the centuries before. Freedom of thought, speech, and printing, which is not the freedom to do unbridled hurt to others, is not yet full or secure; its price is indeed eternal vigilance; but if there be accomplished one half as much as has been achieved since the time of Thomas Jefferson there will be full measure. The few are yet very rich and many are yet very poor; but the worst of poverty and the arrogance of the rich have both been greatly softened; few now starve in the streets and that middle class that works and lives with comfort has been multiplied and multiplied again and again. Gaming and drunkenness and debauchery and licentiousness are much less than they were in years that I can remember; much less indeed than they were a hundred years ago. There is less and less cruelty to children and women and beasts. There is much less fear and hate in religion; much more love and helpfulness.

Yes, the world moves. The world has moved. The world will move. Again and again and again I hear the clear voice of Pippa, ragged little girl, worker in the mill that had only one day of holiday a year —

> The year's at the spring,
> And day's at the morn;
> Morning's at seven;
> The hillside's dew-pearled;
> The lark's on the wing;
> The snail's on the thorn;
> God's in His heaven —
> All's right with the world.

Mar 71 [illegible]